Bulletin—

of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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Number 33-48

1st Quarter
1958-61

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No. 33-48
1958-61

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Annual subscription rates ..		Five shillings (British)
	or	U.S. $0.75
Individual copies		1/6 (British)
	or	U.S. $0.20

Subscribers are requested to pay these amounts or the equivalent value to the office of their national Bible Society (see list inside back cover)

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

FIRST QUARTER - 1958

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Editorial

IT IS NOT LONG SINCE an issue of the BULLETIN was devoted to Latin America. But the quality of the papers read at the U.B.S. Conference in Sao Paulo last summer and the very different nature of the information they provided from that in the articles published previously, seemed to justify devoting this issue also to Latin America. The visitors from all parts of the world at the U.B.S. meetings all became sensitive to the particular conditions under which Bible work is being carried on in the "continent of to-morrow". The reports many of them wrote on their return give a clear proof of this.

The papers quoted in this issue (some in part only) will help the reader, it is hoped, to catch some impression of these conditions and of the general situation in Latin America, and to form in his mind a clearer picture of the opportunities and also of the problems which face the Bible Societies in that part of the world. Our colleagues and the churches in those areas need our help, but they need first of all our prayers.

In addition to the papers referred to, which were all prepared by people who have for years been closely connected with Latin America, it has seemed fit to add also a few notes prepared by the Rev. E. H. Robertson, U.B.S. Study Secretary, after a ten weeks tour in those parts. It was his first visit there; he came with the specific purpose of finding out not so much how the Bible is used in missionary work as what part the Scripture has in the total picture of the churches' life. Though the point of his message is directed first at the churches, it is clear also that the Bible Societies cannot afford to ignore the shortcomings which are indicated in the use of the Scriptures for the strengthening of the Church and of its members. While the Bible Societies are rightly concerned to remind the churches ceaselessly that there is no better evangelistic tool than the Bible, indeed, that the Bible, the Word of God, is its own missionary, they are none the less aware of the need to proclaim just as relentlessly that no church or individual Christian can remain firm and alive in faith unless continually nurtured by the regular reading and careful study of the Scripture.

Prior to the U.B.S. meetings in July, the secretaries of the A.B.S. and B.F.B.S. Latin American Agencies had met for a week. They embodied the gist of their discussions and findings in a document which was forwarded to the U.B.S. Council for information and record. This document is also reproduced in the present BULLETIN, as a useful complement to the papers presented at the Conference.

O.B.

God's Manifold Grace

Notes on morning devotions at the U. B. S. Conference, Brazil, July, 1957

A MEETING LIKE OURS, at which people of different nations and denominations are working together, shows us very clearly how manifold are the gifts which God has given to us. Many and varied are our mother tongues, the churches to which we are attached, the ways in which we look at and handle things, the size and character of the Bible Societies to which we belong.

Do we realise why God did not want us all to be alike, but gave us a "manifold grace"? He did so because he wanted us to employ the gifts he has given to each one of us for the benefit of one another. If we were all alike we could not serve one another efficiently. For how could I help a man to new insights if he knew everything exactly as I do? And how could I be helped by another man if I could do everything myself that he could do for me? Thus the great diversity of God's gifts is his way of enabling us to fulfil his will that we should serve one another.

Yet human nature here as elsewhere tends to make that which should help us to fulfil God's will an obstacle to its fulfilment. For instead of using the manifold gifts of God for mutual service, we begin to compare them and then to draw very human conclusions.

We may find, for example, that as individuals or as churches or as Societies our particular gifts are relatively small as compared with those of others. And soon we say: let the others do what has got to be done. They have more resources, they have more experience, they have more facilities. They therefore may also be expected to get on with the work. No one can expect us, with our small gifts, to do anything here. This is exactly the attitude we find in the parable of the talents, where the servant who had received but one talent buried it because he thought that only five or two talents were worth working with. We know what our Lord said about that unfaithful servant.

The hindrance may also come from the opposite direction. We may discover that the gifts we have received compare favourably with those of other people. And this may lead us to think that nobody could expect us to bow down and waste our strength and time in sharing the interests, problems and needs of those with the few gifts.

We do not want to be bothered by that, but prefer to follow unhampered our own far-flung aims and aspirations. Again it is an attitude which we find depicted in the parable of the pharisee and the publican. The pharisee was right in thanking God for the rich gifts he had bestowed upon him, but he was wrong in looking upon those gifts as a reason for despising his neighbour instead of helping him.

Let us pray that God may free us from all wrong attitudes to the "manifold grace" he has given to us and that he may help us to see how clearly the variety of gifts is God's way of helping us to minister one to another. We could not help one another if we were all alike. But we can render one another invaluable services on account of the "manifold grace" which God has given to us. Let us therefore, as individuals, as churches, as Bible Societies, beseech God to make us "good stewards of God's varied grace".

ERICH EICHELE

The Thirst for The Word of God in Latin-America

J. H. Twentyman

AS WE LOOK BACK over the past four centuries since the Spanish conquerors landed on American soil and subdued the native inhabitants of this fair continent by methods which could hardly be called "Christian", we catch a glimpse of the basic reasons why even to-day that perennial thirst for God's Word remains largely unquenched and unsatisfied.

For three hundred years after Cortes and Pizarro, with their gold-thirst companions, landed on these shores, the Word of God was an unknown Book in Latin America. True the Church was here, men and women were baptized—they were baptized, we are told, by the thousands—but the effective living of the Christian life as the result of the reading of the Scriptures was unknown and unpractised. Even as late as 1843, Dr. Thomson, the Bible Society's indefatigable agent in Latin America and the West Indies, relates that a parochial priest attached to the Roman Catholic cathedral in Merida, Yucatan (and here I quote): "had never seen a Bible in Spanish till the other day, and did not even know that there had ever been a Spanish translation of it published".

It is a lamentable fact that until James Thomson arrived in Buenos Aires in 1818, no enthusiasm had been shown for the circulation of God's Word. Certainly Padre Scio's version in Spanish had been published at Madrid in 1794, but its circulation in Latin America was not encouraged, except when used by the Bible Society, without notes and comments, and hence without ecclesiastical sanction. Padre Torres Amat published another text in Madrid in 1823, which in the course of time became the most widely used Roman Catholic version in Spanish until quite recently. While some thousands of copies of this Bible have been circulated, the total number compared with the population has been insignificant and its impact on the life of the continent can scarcely be considered.

I

Although Thomson, and others who nobly followed in his steps, showed great initiative and tenacity of purpose in the Society's service, and distributed either directly or indirectly many thousands of copies of Scripture, little of a permanent nature was accomplished until towards the close of last century. Two further names belonging to this period must be mentioned: Andrew Milne and his now famous counterpart, Francisco Penzotti. Both traversed the length and breadth of this southern continent during the last 30 years of the nineteenth century, Penzotti even reaching Central America where he was appointed Bible Society Agent from 1892 to 1907. They laboured faithfully and not unsuccessfully during the period to which Dr. Stewart Herman refers when he says that "the cutting edge of the Protestant witness was not some magic means of mass communication such as we know to-day in radio, but

simply the unamplified voice of the courageous missionary who travelled for weeks on foot or on mule back, through hostile country, with a bundle of Bibles among his personal effects". And he goes on to say that "probably the single most important influence of the whole nineteenth century was the persistent and heroic colportage undertaken by the Bible Societies". And it must be remembered what *was* done through the abnegating service of the Society's agents and the early missionary pioneers, was accomplished, almost entirely, in the face of determined ecclesiastical opposition and in the forbidding atmosphere of religious intolerance. Nevertheless, by 1901 Bible Society agencies (either British & Foreign, or American, or both) had been permanently established in Mexico, Cuba, Central America, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil and Argentina. And God's Word was being circulated in ever increasing numbers throughout the length and breadth of the Latin-speaking New World, over a quarter of a million copies being distributed in the year 1905. By 1915 this number had increased to more than half a million a year. It must, however, be borne in mind that those Scriptures had to suffice for a population of over 83 millions . . . . . one copy for every 164 people! With commendable zeal, the Society pursued its task despite the tragic decision of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 to exclude Latin America from its missionary agenda on the mistaken assumption that as the territory was already being cared for through the services of the Roman Communion, it did not constitute a mission field, nor did it call for a share in the prayers and missionary activities of the Christian Church in the homelands, or in what are now called the "sending countries". This was a most unfortunate error, the effects of which have long retarded the progress of the Protestant cause in Latin America. But to-day, Latin America is "on the move"—the church is alive and growing, nurtured by the Word of God, and indigenous. While at the time of the Panama Conference in 1916 there was an evangelical community of only 122,875 persons, it is now estimated that there are over 5 million, a 40-fold increase in as many years, although the population has not more than doubled during the same period. The annual Scripture circulation has increased from half a million (510,365) in 1915 to almost six and a half million (6,471,652) in 1955. That is, one person in every 28 secured a copy of Scripture, which is a remarkable achievement compared with the 1915 figure of only one copy for every 164 people. But we are still faced with the sober fact that 27 out of 28 people did not receive the Word. Granted that some of these had previously procured a copy, at a conservative estimate I would venture to say that there are even now over 100 million people in Latin America awaiting the comforting and vital ministrations of the Bible Society and the Christian Church —in a word, they are waiting for the Bible and its life-giving message. The thirst for the Scriptures in this part of the world remains unquenched.

II

I want to refer briefly to two problems which have effectively hindered the accomplishment of our ideal. First, there have been, and in some cases still are, serious shortages of supplies. Ever since the last war those of us on the field have suffered the embarrassing handicap of insufficient supplies, or of lengthy delays in the receiving of orders. Unfortunately such difficulties have not yet been completely overcome, although encouraging progress has been made. Of the eight Spanish-speaking Latin American agencies recently reporting on this matter, only four were able to give an unqualified answer in the positive to the question as to whether current Scripture supplies were sufficient to meet

their needs, while three referred to the long delays still being experienced before receiving their orders, and one agency definitely stated that it was unable to supply the demand. Six and a half million copies of Scripture a year are not sufficient to quench Latin America's thirst for God's Word.

Secondly, there is the continuing problem of illiteracy. Of the estimated population of 175 millions, probably at least 50% are still unable to read, although exact statistics are not available. Notable progress has been made by governments, the Protestant church and private initiative during recent years towards increasing the percentage of literacy; but as more readers seek reading material year by year, are we of the Bible Society in a position to supply them with "the most valuable thing that this world affords"?

III

For almost 140 years the Bible Society has tirelessly pursued its task of supplying the Scriptures in ever increasing numbers. Between 90-100 million copies have been circulated during this interval of time, and God has wrought many miracles of changed lives. The following, taken from a colporteur's recent report, is representative: While in the market place one day, a man approached the colporteur and explained that eleven years previously he had been one of a group of workmen listening to him explain the life and death of our Lord, when a policeman came up and forbade him to continue. In spite of this, a number of men bought New Testaments out of curiosity, including our friend. When he arrived home, his wife wanted to burn the book, saying that it was a sin even to possess such a book. So the Testament had to be hidden at the bottom of an unused trunk. As the years went by, a verse referred to by the colporteur kept coming back to his mind—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, all is vanity". The Testament was retrieved from the trunk and diligently read until finally the light dawned and, in his own words, "I came to know the truth, I went to the evangelical church and there I *and* my wife gave ourselves to the Lord".

The persecution of Protestants continues in Latin America—their blood is shed, in Colombia, Bolivia, Mexico and in other parts. Although officially there is freedom of worship throughout the continent, there are still many places where it *costs* to be a Christian. On the other hand, it is not too much to say that more and more, Protestants are gaining the respect and confidence of the population in general. It is no longer an uncommon experience for an evangelical who is looking for a job, to hear his prospective employer say: If you are an evangelical that is sufficient, I don't need any further recommendation. Dr. Stanley Rycroft, chairman of the Committee on Co-operation in Latin America, reports that in Chile the Pentecostals have a reputation for their integrity, sobriety, reliability and punctuality at their work.

In 1955, Father Vergara, a Jesuit priest, wrote an article on "The Advance of the Evangelicals in Chile", in which he states that there are 681,770 evangelicals in that country, representing 11.36% of the total population, while, he says, an optimistic estimate of Chileans who attend Mass is only 10%. And in Bolivia during recent months, three outstanding conversions of Roman Catholic clergy have taken place, in each case as the direct result of their reading and study of the Scriptures.

The intensive circulation carried on for many years by the Bible Societies has also been mirrored in the increased interest displayed by the Roman Church in the distribution of Church-approved versions. Within the past twelve or fifteen years several Spanish versions of the Scriptures have been published, including those translated by Monsignor Juan Straubinger of Buenos Aires, Padres Bover and Canter, and Padres Nacar and Colunga of Spain. The last named is a very fine version, made directly from the original languages, and containing a minimum of notes and comments. It has passed through a number of editions and appears to be widely used in Latin America. This increased interest, displayed on the part of the Roman Church in Bible distribution, is well illustrated by the following incident from Guatemala, where the priests themselves began circulating the New Testament. Later they recalled the copies, but many refused to return them! Similar experiences may be quoted from Cuba, where the lively interest displayed by Protestants in Scripture circulation has caused the Roman Church to send printed cards to many people whose names and addresses were found in the telephone directories, recommending the reading of the Nacar-Colunga version. The implication, of course, is that if Bible reading cannot be stopped, let the faithful at least read a version which has been approved by the Church!

The well-known verse in Isaiah 55:11 assures us that God's Word will not return to Him void, without accomplishing His will. Benefits, both spiritual and material, individual and national, follow the diffusion of the Word of God. Dr. Gonzalez Molina very truly refers to the fact that, as one of those benefits, the Bible keeps alive the desire for freedom, so natural in the life of these Latin peoples, who consider the right to be free from every yoke a sacred privilege. They long to live in a democratic atmosphere of peace and work.

In conclusion, I need hardly remind you that our task has but begun. To-day, in 1957, there are an estimated 100 million souls in Latin America without the Word. To-morrow, within a bare 20 years, when it is calculated the population will have risen to over 300 million, there may well be 200 million souls without the Bible, the majority of whom will be literate, awaiting with outstretched hands for you and me to give them the Book—this Book to which we have dedicated our lives.

Don Fernando Ortiz, one of Cuba's outstanding intellectuals, when opening a Book Fair, publicly expressed this thought: "The Bible is the Book of God, to guide the peoples and to give orientation to the nations. Cuba owes to the Bible the spirit of liberty and democracy that illumines every person, from the dweller in the humblest shack to those in the highest ranks of society".

And we may add that we, and those whom we represent in other lands, who know God in Jesus Christ, owe it to the Bible-thirsty souls here in Latin America and elsewhere, to give them God's Divine Word of Life. Nay, more, we owe it to our Master Who calls us to redouble our efforts towards the satisfying of that thirst.

The Catholicity of Colportage

J. W. Limkemann

NO FORM OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS has greater evangelistic possibilities than that of colportage. With the Scriptures published in 1,109 languages it is universal in potential. It can be practised helpfully by the least capable Christian. Of course it is most potent in the hands of highly skilled servants in the Church of Christ, who are prepared to guide readers intelligently. The enthusiasm shown by Christians frequently spreads to unbelievers who in turn become distributors before they drink of the fountain of living water themselves. The masses to-day, while prejudiced against the ordinary services of the church, are not hindered from accepting and reading the Scriptures when once assured that the Bible is not inseparably bound to the phenomena of the church as known to them, but that it is the Book of the ages and that one of its missions is to correct the aberrations of the church in every age. It speaks to the heart of every man about his relationship to God.

Therefore religious boundaries are readily crossed by colportage. Language barriers vanish when the distributor, with good will, although it may be in silence, hands to a stranger a booklet in his own language. Illiteracy itself ceases to be a hindrance when the literate read to the illiterate and both receive the Word of God thereby.

The dialectic of the pure catholicity of the Bible and of its intense individuality is inescapable. It is a book that can only be explained as coming from, and being written for the people of God. It is distinctly the Church's book. But just as emphatically it is "My Book", every man may truthfully say. When either of these is lost from view the result is either extreme, sectarian divisiveness; or cold, formal religion. With the apostle Paul we must know that "Christ liveth in me" as truly as that there is one body, and that Christ is not divided.

When the Church, the chosen instrument of God to mediate His salvation, fails in its responsibilities God is not defeated. Those who were not His people are elected to put to shame the very people of God. It ever remains true that to those who receive Him to them He gives power to become the sons of God. With deep regret we must say that the Church in Latin America was not giving the Word of Life to the people. One hundred years ago the Bible was almost completely unknown in these lands. To fill the need God raised up many servants, some very noble, others most sectarian and even heretical. But in any case the Scriptures have come to the people of Latin America. It is not ours to chide the Lord saying, "Why didst thou not use the Church that was here?" Rather we bow in thanksgiving for all that has been done during the past 100 years, and in repentance for our failure to maintain the unity of the body of Christ.

How it Happened in Central America

Evangelical Christianity in Central America is squarely based on the reading of the Bible. In this it is no different from the remainder of Latin America. One of the earliest Protestant colporteurs was Frederick Crowe, an Englishman

who was a drunken schoolteacher until his conversion in Belize. In 1842 he undertook as a personal responsibility the distribution of Scriptures in Guatemala while teaching English in that republic. Although he was expelled from Guatemala in 1849 the seed he planted bore fruit without further cultivation until the entrance of Protestant missionaries 40 years later. In 1887 the Rev. E. M. Haymaker discovered an old believer, Julian Suarez, in the town of Amatitlan, and began to hold services in his house preaching from the very Bible that Crowe had given him. Other believers no doubt remained though their names are lost to history.

When Francisco Penzotti, the highly honoured colporteur of Latin America, began work in Central America in 1892, he chose young men to help him. Without formal preparation these men began to spread the printed page, direct results of which are still in evidence. In May, 1957, the writer conferred with Frederico Echeverria of Guatemala, now a retired Presbyterian minister, who bought his first Bible for ten pesos from one of these young men. At the time he had only 5 pesos available. He took the Bible promising to pay the remainder later. By the time he was able to pay the balance three months later, he himself was spreading the Word of God among his countrymen. This example multiplied many times provides a concrete explanation of the phenomenal growth of the evangelical Church in Central America. To-day some estimate as high as 200,000 evangelicals in Guatemala alone. However that may be, we know that this year over 200,000 copies of the Scriptures will be purchased in that land of three million inhabitants, or at least one for each fifteen people, far in excess of the normal distribution by Bible Societies in traditionally Protestant countries. What is the result? A wide sustained interest in the Gospel, and a constant growth of evangelical churches. In early May of this year (1957) Dr. John A. Mackay preached nightly to crowds ranging from 5,000 upwards in the open air theatre of Guatemala City. Forty thousand evangelicals participated in a parade on Sunday, May 5, that extended twenty blocks and marched through the heart of the city carrying banners that bore testimony to the Bible, and singing hymns as they marched. Seventy-five years ago no Protestant church existed in the country; to-day there are over a hundred congregations in the capital city alone, and others scattered in every important town and even to the villages of dialect-speaking Indians. Thorough theological training is still wanting. But the Water of Life is available through the reading and discussion of the Bible and thirsty souls find the satisfaction that has long been denied them.

In the Spring of 1957, throughout Central America numerous people were questioned about the motives that inspired colportage, preparation given for this work, the class of people most effectively reached by it, the results, and the obstacles encountered. These answers are supplemented by other information gathered in the field or found in the files of the Bible Society Agency in Cristobal.

Motives

First of all is the question: What moves people to distribute the Scriptures? While it is true that a few make their entire living, or add to their meagre earnings by this work, both they and thousands more are motivated much more deeply. One missionary says that Christians do it to lead their own people into a "meaningful religious experience"; he added that it "no doubt enhanced prestige" among fellow believers. Another said, "They have found a real *joy* in the Gospel and want to share it". A Nicaraguan pastor confessed simply, "I *love* the Word". An untrained, and quite uncouth burly fellow in El Salvador goes afoot among the villages of his area on Sundays and holidays selling the

Scriptures out of gratitude for his own salvation from a life of drunkenness and vice. A veteran missionary in western Guatemala has found many willing to do this work out of "*joy* of having a truth and passing it on". A recent convert in eastern Guatemala spreads the Scriptures in the course of his daily work due to his "new life in Christ".

Reviewing these motives it is noteworthy that "love" and "joy" coupled with life or experience are to the fore, reminding us of the motivation of witnesses in New Testament times. Prestige within the group is a factor, and a very healthy one, for it means that even though every member of the Church may not be active, yet all consider it normal to evangelize one's neighbours and friends. And why should this not be normal throughout the church? Why should it be considered either honourable or respectable to hide the light under a bushel in this day of trouble and darkness?

Secondary motives came to light in the investigation. These are not to be neglected. First it was pointed out by a minister in Panama that his people love to visit in homes and in the market. A man welcomes any good reason for going out to see other people and talk with them. The world over, not in Latin America alone, man hungers for companionship. Let the church use the social instinct common to all men to foster the greater fellowship in Christ.

The urge to travel and to see new places is another motive. One instance is that of a young pastor from southern Nicaragua who decided to visit new fields during his vacation of two weeks. Supplying himself with the small stock of Bibles and Testaments that he could carry, he travelled through the country to northern Nicaragua and across the border into Honduras. He sold his entire stock. Upon return his denomination appointed him part time colporteur while serving as a pastor of a small church.

Directors of training schools for Christian service revealed that either they require the students to practise colportage or strongly encourage it. The reason they give is that by it young men training for the ministry are given courage to meet people in real life and to understand their needs. The too theoretical studies of the classroom are constantly challenged by the practical application of the Word of God to people in every walk of life. A trainee who learns to preach to one, and to hear his objections, is better prepared to preach to a large congregation later.

Preparation

The second question asked was: What preparation is necessary for this work? It is granted that the most complete biblical and theological training available fits a man the better, yet with shame we may need to confess that the best prepared instruments sometimes lie idle. But when put to use these serve best to encourage and prepare others. The Rev. Paul Burgess, now retired, a doctor in philosophy, has spent a life-time among the people of Guatemala producing literature and personally selling it from town to town on market days. He has sent out many young men to sell the Scriptures. His method as stated in his own words is to "associate a beginner with an experienced person". He himself is the teacher, as a rule. In house to house work both he and Mr. Ralph Rice are convinced that the best way is to train one at a time. Neither of these experienced colporteurs rely much on lectures. Only a few simple instructions are given, but emphasis is placed on learning by doing. Even when working in market places Dr. Burgess takes along no more than two learners at a time. He recommends a course in personal evangelism as added preparation.

The third question asks about the class of people that can be reached by colportage. Actually the method is very adaptable. The answer seems to depend on the one doing the work. Generally a worker will reach best his own class of people. In Honduras the writer is acquainted with numerous farmers who have successfully won other farmers to the faith, but perhaps would be at a loss in the city. It is abundantly evident that people work most effectively among friends and acquaintances. But a missionary in Nicaragua who has very successfully carried out colportage work in that country and in Panama and Honduras works from house to house regardless of class. In Guatemala City a man employed by a Christian Institution to care for its legal affairs keeps a supply of New Testaments which he distributes to employees in the government offices he enters. Several republics have men who make it a point to present a Bible to each new president when he takes office. Students from a Pentecostal Bible School in El Salvador reach mostly the poor class because, as it was stated, "water seeks its own level". But not always. Where there is sincerity and not the motive of social climbing the poor of the lower classes work helpfully with the wealthy and educated. Dr. Burgess said, "There are many cases of men of marked humility that recommend the Gospel to the higher classes". He cited the case of Adolfo Martinez, the barefoot pastor of Retalhuleu, Guatemala, who has confidence with public officials and commands their respect to the extent that he has social superiors in his congregation. Also Marcelino Vasquez, an Indian who never was afraid to testify to men of culture or wealth, is respected by them. But why should we be surprised at this? Do we not read of the boldness of Peter and John who were reckoned as "uneducated, common men"?

But in Tegucigalpa, capital of Honduras, in one instance the Scriptures were propagated with meaning and power in a very different manner. A missionary family for three years has been living next door to a cultured lady. She respects and trusts them to the extent that she goes to them with her problems with a confidence that she does not have in her father confessor. In their conversations with her the missionary and his wife carefully avoided quoting the Scriptures for she was not familiar with them. They never offered her a Bible either as a gift or by sale. But their manner of life communicated to her the message of the Bible. Purely on her own initiative she recently purchased a Bible while on a trip to the United States. What can we say but that here was colportage at its best. The children of the Kingdom are called to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Is it too much to assume that there is no class of people that cannot be reached with the Bible and its message providing that the endeavour is guided by the wisdom and love of God?

The fourth question inquires about results. With this activity, mostly on the part of people of little prestige, is not our cause cheapened? What has happened in Central America? In broad terms the answer was given at the beginning, but let us look at cases. In a Bible-less area of Nicaragua after some years of colportage work, although no evangelical church has been formed, practically all business men have Bibles on their desks; less obvious are the Bibles placed in the homes.

In some instances the work of the colporteur leads to a direct decision to give one's life to Christ; in many more the seed is sown and only by faith does the worker see the harvest. But the harvest comes in unexpected ways, mostly through the quiet decision of individuals and families to examine more carefully the Way. Generally the results escape our records. However, there are known striking instances. Colporteur Bahini about four years ago worked in the unevangelized town of Zompopero, province of Izabal, Guatemala. To-day there

is a congregation of 70 or more evangelicals as a result of this work. The Rev. Robert Gussick of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Mission tells how a congregation grew up in villages on the coast across the swamp from Puerto Barrios, Guatemala. One man, the natural leader of the community, called on the Lutheran pastor in Puerto Barrios. He was given a Bible and a catechism. With occasional instructions from missionaries and pastors he used these two books to lead his own people into a meaningful religious experience. A congregation was gathered, a chapel built, and simple services were held. At last, urged by the people themselves, a missionary went to confirm the believers in the faith. This, Mr. Gussick states, was the first visit from the outside to the congregation.

Difficulties

The work of Scripture distribution, while open to everyone who is willing to do it, is no easy task. Various obstacles stand in the way of its universal practice. The greatest difficulty, we confess with shame, is inertia among the people of God. We say that we believe in God who gave His only Son; that we believe in the miracle of the Incarnation; that we believe in God who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead. But those who act boldly on this widely confessed faith are often viewed with almost unbelieving wonder, and sometimes suspected as being at least slightly abnormal. Of course there is a precedent for this attitude from the outside, for was not Paul considered crazy? But the shame consists in that this view is held by those within the church. The remedy must be sought in the leaders. The Great Shepherd has set pastors over his flock. Bible Societies have the task of convincing the Church to-day of the value of extensive Bible reading.

The second difficulty is the unpredictability of response. No matter how successful distributors may be in scattering quantities of Scriptures among the people, there is no control of the free spirit of man on the one hand, or the free Spirit of God on the other. Consequently results come as surprises. Negative results are often evident where the best work has been done, and miraculous positive results where nothing was done that could be recorded.

Third, in Central America, as in other parts of the world where the masses are rising, we encounter illiteracy. Of all methods colportage on first thought seems least adapted to illiterates. But this is to forget the few literates scattered among the illiterate masses. It is also to forget the charm, almost magic, that listening to what the printed page says holds for the man who has not learned to read.

Education is spreading rapidly and a generation is rising that is opening the wonders of the world of literature to the older generation. In our day we again see the fulfilment of the prophecy that says, "A little child shall lead them". Indeed, in Panama when the Gospel of Mark in the dialect of the San Blas Indians was published in 1951, children began reading the Scriptures to their parents in their own tongue. Older people generally were illiterate, but their children were attending school learning to read in Spanish. With very brief instruction these children learned to read fluently in their own dialect as soon as the Scriptures were published in it.

A fourth difficulty, and it is universal, is indifference. A Spanish proverb puts it, "No one is as deaf as he who does not want to hear". Responsible leaders repeatedly warn enthusiastic new believers not to argue. The Rev. Leland

Edwards, of Panama, tells his people to leave the indifferent alone; let them see the difference the Gospel makes in the lives of members of the church. We are not commissioned to be successful, nor to build the Kingdom of God. It is God who builds His kingdom; we are his witnesses. Our part is to show our love to God and man by giving ourselves wholly in service.

A fifth difficulty is that of first arousing interest in reading the Scriptures, then in teaching to read helpfully. The very act of selling may arouse interest because to sell means to enter into serious conversation with the buyer. But let us not be deceived by the method of the market place, for the Holy Spirit is not to be had by purchase, and our Lord Himself overturned the tables of money-changers in the temple. Pedro Valerio, of the Evangelical and Reformed Church of northern Honduras told of a colportage campaign in Sulaco, a town in the province of Yoro, Honduras, two years ago. Recently he visited the town again and was distressed to learn that the Scriptures acquired two years ago are not being read. Of course the same often happens when the Scriptures are given freely. Continuous guidance in reading, and the warmth of the fellowship of the Church, where Christ has promised to be present, cannot be exchanged for an individual pietism that feeds in isolation on the printed page.

Voluntary distributors

We therefore call for a great multitude of distributors so that each may visit frequently with new readers giving them the help required, and bringing them into the fellowship of God's people. "Every believer in the Bible a distributor of the Bible" may well be our motto. The Bible Societies must place the burden on the churches. We do well to consider the value of creating simple reading guides for each distinct cultural area. The Gospel indeed is one, but the diversity within the unity of Scriptures leads us to believe that some parts are more directly effective in some cultures, other parts in others.

The desire to read the Bible in Latin America is a challenge to the Church in its world wide mission. The long neglect of the Bible in this traditionally Christian area is a warning to the Church in every place where it enjoys prestige. Unless the Church in that situation accepts the Bible as the Word of God for evangelizing the masses at its doors and for correcting the life within its walls, it may find itself in the unenviable position of the traditional Church in Latin America. Men are restless until they find rest in God. Those inside and outside the Church will reach out to take the cup of salvation no matter whose the hand may be that offers it. If there has been failure to make clear the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ as offered in the Scriptures, distributors, with limited knowledge or with a divisive spirit are ready to enter. And the masses prefer to receive the Word wrongly interpreted, rather than to be denied that Word entirely.

How much better it would be if the entire Church were to take seriously its duty to give the Bread of Life to the hungry masses. The Bible is the book of the Church. Its propagation is of universal importance and may be carried out by whoever is willing to be a worker together with God. May UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES enter upon its mission of the wider distribution of the Scriptures by actively encouraging Christians everywhere to read the Book, to distribute it among neighbours and friends, to help new readers to understand its message, and to provide fellowship in the Church. Let those who give financial support be the first to give themselves to the task of the wise distribution of the Scriptures. This is the way that leads to the practical catholicity of colportage.

The Missionary Power of the Bible

I. AN ILLUSTRATION FROM LA PLATA

A. C. Peres

IN THE LA PLATA AGENCY, the churches have laid emphasis on the task of making the Bible known. Different methods have been used and church members have been most helpful and shown great devotion to the cause, going to the houses door by door and inviting people to read the Word of God.

A few months ago one of the largest churches in Buenos Aires initiated with extraordinary success a special campaign of distribution of the Holy Scriptures. To do this they prepared members of their congregation, who set out in couples, in accordance with a plan which had been already made out, to visit the houses in that district which had been assigned to them. These couples left a copy of the Bible in each house, with a leaflet explaining what the book really meant, and giving quotations from it. They said they would return in a few days when the recipients could either pay for the Bible or return it. These couples visited both private houses and commercial firms. Some days later they returned and were agreeably surprised to see the number of people who were interested in learning more about the Bible. Very few people refused to buy it, and even among those who refused at first, some were persuaded to change their minds. The effort was most encouraging. Quite a number of people began to attend the church, where many of them became active members. Once again the Bible triumphed, and these church members, by going into the street and abandoning the church enclosure, with the Bible in their hands, were most successful in obtaining new members anxious to find the true Way indicated by the Cross of Christ, and finally eternal salvation.

Another church with energetic members started the methodical visitation of various tenement houses, where hundreds of people lived. In one of these houses, where the number was largest, these church members had the bright idea of getting several young men to read passages from the Bible in a loud voice, giving at the same time a short explanation to those present. This attracted the attention of the bystanders, who listened to the speakers and began to show considerable interest. They asked the church members to go back to visit them. One can imagine the joy of these brethren when they received this request and they naturally went back to the tenement. Soon they were able to start a Sunday School in this same house, because as so many people lived there, they were able to collect some 70 children, who began to attend regularly. This corroborates once again the assertion that even if the work is difficult and long, the results are good and the effort made by the churches to make known God's Word has unexpected triumphs.

Actually the members of the many churches in this conutry take pains and do all they can to carry out campaigns of evangelization in halls, plazas and parks. They always consider that the principal point is the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures and employ many methods to attain their objective.

In a town adjoining Buenos Aires the members of one church meet in the principal plaza, where there is a continuous movement of pedestrians and vehicles, and hold an open-air meeting, making use of loud speakers to proclaim their message. Whilst some young men take the service, others place themselves at strategical points round the square and hand out Gospels to all those who show interest. They take advantage of this opportunity to explain quickly the contents of the little book which they are distributing and invite the recipients to attend the meetings. Good results have been obtained with this work and many people have borne testimony that their conversion was due to the reading of the Gospel which had been handed to them at a meeting in the square.

Methods vary but the objective is always the same. The Bible is used to break down the walls of unbelief, fanaticism and materialism. For this we require God's Word, the power which cannot be overcome because it reaches the human heart and causes a complete surrender to Christ.

Quite recently a group of young men decided with their pastor to buy a coach and prepare it for doing evangelical work. After some weeks of preparation the coach was ready, so they filled it up with Bibles and set off. They left the city and began to play sacred music over the loudspeakers to call people's attention. Then they read a portion of Scripture. A group of young men went through the streets offering the Holy Scriptures and explaining their worth. This naturally attracted a lot of attention and we have been assured that many people bought copies of the Scriptures.

Many other evident and irrefutable proofs could be given to show the triumphs of the Bible, in the home, in the street, in the plazas, in the hospitals, in the prisons, in the valleys and the hills. Everywhere and in every latitude, without distinction of race or nation, the Bible has opened a path and left behind it a luminous star, the rays of which show the Cross of Christ.

Experience has shown us that when the vanguard was the Bible, success was sure, because once the seed was sown, it sprouted, grew and gave fruit in abundance. The Word of God will not return empty, but thanks to the efforts of the churches and all the believers who work in making it known, the words of the prophet will be fulfilled: "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

II. AS EXPERIENCED IN BRAZIL

D. Gomes

In 1882, soon after the promulgation of the Brazilian Constitution, Dr. Joaquim Nogueira Paranagua, one of the the first colonizers of South Piaui and member of a large and cultured family, visited the town of Corrente and confirmed the great lack of proper books in the public school. He did not have an immediate plan to help the school but returned to his work in the Federal Capital. He was a highly respected doctor, an inspector of hygiene, and a deputy of one of the provinces during the time of the imperial government. Upon arriving in the town of Barra, in the state of Bahia, he heard of a conspiracy that was afoot to kill the missionary Zacarias Taylor. The plan was to throw this man of God to the "piranhas" (flesh-eating fish) in the Sao Francisco river. Dr. Paranagua immediately used his influence with the local authorities and the life of Zacarias Taylor was spared. On the following day, Dr. Paranagua received a New Testament

from the missionary and promised him that he would read it. It was with pleasure that he began the reading of this great book and within a few days he was convinced of the value of it. Just at this time he had the good fortune to meet a colporteur from the Bible Society and, remembering the need of good books in the school of his home town, he purchased five Bibles in the Catholic version of Figueredo and Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and had them sent to his brother in Corrente. The Gospels were given to the students for use in the school and the Bibles offered to some friends of the family. Very soon afterwards, Colonel Benjamin Nogueira began to examine the Word of God. He was converted as were all who received a copy, with the exception of the teacher of the public school. Dr. Joaquim was also converted and became a great blessing to the cause of the Gospel in our land. To-day, Corrente is one of the centres of evangelisation in the northern part of our country, and its influence on Brazilian life is greatly appreciated.

Who was the colporteur who sold those Bibles? We do not know. From which of the Bible Societies did the Bibles come? Again, we do not know, and this does not matter. The Bible Societies become even greater as we think of them in their sowing, without thinking of themselves or of the glory that this sowing can give to human entities. Their service is done to God.

In the beginning of this century, there lived, in a place called "Onça do Pitangui" (Tiger of Pitangui) a very devout Catholic family. They were so religious that two of the women decided to take in washing in order to save enough money to bring the priest of Pitangui to their little village once a month to perform Mass.One of these ladies was the wife of a railway agent who was an alcoholic addict. As time passed, this agent was transferred to another city. It was in this town that the family met a colporteur who gave them the Scriptures. From that Bible a marvellous conversion was born. And the conversion of this lady became the means by which the other lady, who was her friend in the struggle to pay the priest's transportation costs each month, came to know the Saviour. This just had to take place. So the wife of the railway agent decided to return to her former town to win this friend and others to Christ. She went to her friend's house to read the Word of God with her. The Catholic friend did not want to hear it, but Dona Isa, as she was called, insisted, saying always, "You just have to know the book that brought freedom to me and to my husband".

And so it was that after many misfortunes of all kinds, and after a year of struggle and testimony, my dearest mother accepted the Gospel of Christ and became a "rock or Gibraltar", ready to suffer excommunication, ridicule, hatred, hunger, danger, unemployment on the part of my father. . . . all for the sake of Christ.

Who was the colporteur who sold the Bible? We do not know, because the work of the Bible Society is not to enlist people on earth, but to enlist them in heaven. . . . . .

We cannot deny outselves the privilege of quoting Dr. A. R. Crabtree, Baptist historian, who says in his book on Baptist history: "The Bible Societies have always been in the vanguard of evangelical missions in Brazil. They sent their representatives and their colporteurs, daring and faithful men, who penetrated into the most remote places, spreading the word of light and preparing the way for missionaries of all denominations".

A New Venture

An account of the work of the Penzotti Institute, Mexico.

S. Nelson

"EL INSTITUTO 'FRANCISCO G. PENZOTTI' " was founded by the American Bible Society on September 1, 1955. The growing opportunities for the proclamation of the Gospel in Latin America, and the high interest of the churches in extending their service to unevangelized areas, laid upon the Bible Societies a charge for carrying out their appointed task with new methods to meet the new opportunities. Thus the Penzotti Institute was established to train a group of specialists in the promotion of the wider and more effective distribution and use of the Holy Scriptures through the churches.

The Institute was located in Mexico City because of the splendid opportunities Mexico offered both in resources of teaching personnel and in the varied nature of the field as an area of practical experimentation. The first year of training began on October 2, 1956, and closed on June 25, 1957. Three students completed the course, Tomas Mulder of Argentina, Orlando Perdomo of Cuba, and Raul Macin of Mexico.

The phrase, "through the churches", indicates what the major task of these specialists is to be: the enlistment, training, motivation and guidance of the lay membership of the churches in the task of a wider circulation of the Scriptures. Such a specialist, in carrying out this task, may perform a part or all of the following functions:

1. To organize and direct a programme of Scripture sales by the laymen of a church in their own community. The responsibility of the Bible Society representative will be to train the laymen for the task and to direct their activities during the campaign.

2. To counsel with a church in the establishment of a local depository of Scriptures and in the development of a year-round programme of Scripture distribution.

3. To serve as a counsellor in the use of Scriptures in connection with evangelistic efforts of various kinds. This may include the training and direction of laymen in house-to-house distribution, promotion of sales during an evangelistic campaign, and giving counsel in the best methods of guiding new Christians in the effective reading and study of the Scriptures.

4. To promote, organize and direct a community-wide campaign of Scripture distribution by all of the co-operating churches of a community.

5. To assist a national church or denomination in a programme of Scripture distribution and promotion of reading and study for an area or for the entire country.

6. To assist churches or groups of co-operating churches in a community or larger area in the conservation of the results of a campaign of distribution. This may include counselling in the work of follow-up, visitation and instruction and promotion of organized Bible study in homes, or community Bible study circles for newly interested people.

7. To discover and to take advantage of opportunities for Scripture distribution in institutions, schools, the armed services, etc.

8. To promote the introduction into the curricula and training programmes of Seminaries and Bible Schools, the art of Scripture distribution and the promotion of use in all of its many phases. As opportunity is given, he will give short courses in the Seminaries and Bible Schools and counsel with the faculties in matters pertaining to his specialisation.

9. To aid in providing a climate of interest in the task of a more effective distribution and use of the Scriptures through presentations of various kinds of churches, assemblies, institutes, etc.

The Programme of Training

The programme of training was designed to prepare the man to function adequately in the performance of his specialty. The curriculum was organised into four general areas: 1. The Scriptures; 2. The Bible Societies and their strategy; 3. Background studies; 4. Field experimentation.

1. The Sctiptures

The Bible was studied daily with the following objectives in mind: (a) to enrich the Christian life of the student, (b) to provide greater familiarity with the content, and (c) to provide facility in the use of the Scriptures for the service proposed. Training was also given in the public reading of the Scriptures and in expository preaching and teaching.

2. The Bible Societies and distribution strategy.

This formed a major part of the course. The history of the Bible Societies as part of the story of world evangelization was studied. Their development of policy was reviewed from the historical point of view, and their organisation examined.

In the study of distribution methods, the experimental method was used. A series of projects involving various types of situation were planned, executed and evaluated by the students, each one preparing an orderly report in writing. Special instruction in specific aspects of methodology was given by specialists invited for the purpose. These included the basic principles of salesmanship, personal evangelism, the teaching of adults, group psychology, the special problems of the rural field, etc. Special problems were studied such as those involved in free distribution, mass distribution, saturation programmes, etc.

The following are the major experiments which were carried out.

(*a*) *Direct colportage*. The students were first introduced to the art of direct Scripture sales under the guidance of Secretary J. Gonzalez Molina, operating in a variety of situations in Mexico City. They were then given a week of experience in the company of some of the veteran colporteurs of Mexico during a special institute in Vera Cruz. Later in the year, they worked for two weeks under the inspired leadership of Secretary Ralph Rice of Guatemala.

(*b*) *A local church project*. The first experiment in connection with a church was carried out in Colonia Peralvilla of Mexico City. This was a simple campaign of distribution by sale in the community, using the Christmas portions and other Scriptures. The students shared the responsibility of instructing volunteers during three evening sessions and of administering the distribution campaign during the three days which followed. As the initial church project, it was a satisfying experience for the students. Experience was gained in securing co-operation of the church, in instructing and guiding the laymen, and insight gained into the possibilities which such a project holds for the stimulus of the life of the church and as an outlet for the service interests of the laymen.

(*c*) *Distribution by a church among friends, relatives, etc.*

The second project did not involve community distribution, but among persons with whom the volunteers already had a relationship, such as friends, fellow employees, etc. The principal unit distributed was the Christmas portion. Thirty-five volunteers participated. The type of people reached were the middle class groups, skilled workers, students and professional people. An evaluation of results showed several hundred portions distributed with valuable by-products in a revival of the youth work of the church and a new avenue of expression for the layman.

(*d*) *A Seminary project in connection with the opening of a new mission*

This project had a dual purpose. One was to introduce the students to the possibilities of service to the Seminaries and Bible schools. The other purpose was to study the values of a distribution campaign as a preliminary step in the launching of a new mission. The opportunity came when the Baptist Seminary of Mexico City completed its chapel, nationalised the property according to Mexican law, and announced the intention of developing a Baptist church in the chapel for the service of the community. The project was carefully planned with the administration of the Seminary and was to be completed in a single day. Twenty students participated in addition to the Penzotti students. Instruction was given in a preliminary two-hour session followed by organised canvassing. In this project prospect cards were used for the first time, to register the addresses of those purchasing Scriptures and other pertinent information useful in the subsequent work of conservation of results. The project is too recent for adequate evaluation but valuable experience was acquired by the Penzotti students. A significant part of the project was the group analysis of experience and results by the students of the Seminary under the direction of the professor of field service.

(*e*) *A Sunday afternoon distribution project by a youth group*

The purpose of this project was to discover the possibilities inherent in an all-youth campaign of distribution in the community, carried out in a single afternoon. One of the Penzotti students met with the group two Sundays prior to the day set for the project, discussing it with them and giving some preliminary instruction. On "Project Sunday" the students had lunch with the young people at the church following the Sunday morning service. A brief period of instruction, organisation and service of dedication followed. Distribution in the community then occupied a period of two hours, the young people going out in pairs, the canvassing being done on a house-to-house basis. Afterwards the group met for reports and evaluation. It was a very satisfying experience for the young people and has been recommended by them to other youth groups of the same church (Methodist).

(*f*) *A four week project of distribution and evangelism*

This experiment was centered in a small Baptist church in lower economic level section of the city. The purpose of the project was to test the type of programme that has proved successful in Brazil and elsewhere. Plans were laid several months in advance with the leaders of the church. The first week of the project was devoted to final preparations and instruction of volunteers. The second week the community was canvassed. In one half of the community the Gospel of Luke was distributed gratis with a printed invitation to attend services in the Baptist church the week following, in which the "conferencista" would base his talks on the Gospel of Luke. The other half of the community was canvassed house-to-house with the Gospel sold at its list price of 20 centavos (Mex.) and other Scriptures also sold. In this way it was possible to compare the values of free distribution as opposed to distribution by sale in similar situations. The third week evangelistic services were held every evening in the church with Scripture sales in the community continuing in the area previously covered by free distribution of the Gospel portions. The fourth week was occupied in "follow-up" work in the community. About twenty volunteers participated with about 1200 units of Scriptures distributed. This type of programme has distinct values for a church if properly organised and promoted. It is difficult to sustain a high degree of enthusiam for the entire month, but the results are more permanent than in some other types of evangelism. The experiment in free distribution proved unsatisfactory. The students found that the offer of the portion for a small price is met with less suspicion and the portion is less apt to be destoyed. The conclusion was, "It is easier to sell than to given away a portion.

(*g*) *A co-operative city-wide project*

The final experiment of the year was a campaign of distribution by sale in which all of the churches of San Luis Potosi (pop. 150,000) participated as a united effort. This project had been promoted for several months through meetings with the ministers of the churches, letters, posters and a manual of promotion in the church. It covered a ten day period. Three evenings of class instruction were held—Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. These were held in the Church of the Disciples, the largest and most centrally located church. There was an average attendance of seventy-five volunteers. Canvassing was done during six days: Thursday through Saturday, and Monday through Wednesday. Wednesday a report meeting of all the volunteers who had participated was held in the Disciples' church. San Luis Potosi is one of the more difficult areas for the propagation of the evangelical faith. Nevertheless, several thousand units of Scriptures were sold and more than a thousand prospect cards turned over to the pastors of the churches for further conservation work.

3. Background Studies

The purpose of the courses designated "background studies" was to enrich the culture of the men for their better understanding of their task and the environment in which they are to serve. They included the following studies: (1) A study of the place and significance of the Scriptures from the points of view of various theological positions represented by the different communions, both Protestant and Catholic. (2) A survey of the important reform movements in the history of the church and the place of the Scriptures in these movements. Special attention was paid to the Spanish reformation. (3) A study of the historical roots of the present religious situation in Latin America. Mexico is favoured with the presence of two excellent Protestant scholars in this area, who were generous with

their services and their original sources. (4) The origin and transmission of the Scriptures was reviewed with special attention to the history of the important versions and the historical difference between the Protestant and Catholic versions. The origins of the Spanish versions were carefully traced. (5) A study of Latin American cultural patterns, the problems of communication, techniques and problems of translation and the communication of the Gospel. In connection with this study a visit was made to the Summer School of Linguistics in Mexico City and an over-night trip to an Otomi village to see translation work first hand. (6) The techniques and programme of literacy work were presented in a series of studies by Rev. Raul Fernandez, director of the literacy programme of Cuba. (7) Methods and problems of inter-church co-operation were also presented by Mr. Ferandez who is also secretary of the Cuban Church Council.

4. General evaluation of field experiments

Other projects were discussed, planned, and in some cases organised, but not carried out because of lack of time or other circumstances. These included: (1) A church centred project in a large down-town church combining both promotion of use and distribution. (2) An institute on the Bible for a University student centre. (3) A rapid tour of rural villages with a one-day project in each. (4) A week-long institute in another of the Mexico seminaries. (5) The promotion of home Bible study circles through a church in a residential area.

The programme of field experience can be further enriched. It is believed, however, that the men this year have developed, through the experimental approach, an ability to seek new solutions as new problems and situations present themselves in the fields where they will serve.

The Significance of Bible Society Work in Latin America for The Local Missionary Societies

I. Nothdurft

IT IS DIFFICULT to be both objective and subjective in an appraisal of our Bible work. As a newcomer* to the work, it may be a little easier to look from both sides. Once engaged in the routine there is always the danger of becoming lost in the machinery, losing sight of goals and purposes. One day we were walking down a street in Buenos Aires and came upon a street vendor who evidently sold street maps as his usual job, but on this day "Selecciones" of the Reader's Digest had appeared. Despite the fact that he had a copy of the magazine in each hand, he was still barking about his street maps of the city. It is always salutary to see ourselves as others see us.

Historical Significance

In the first place, one can never overlook what the Society has done throughout the historical development of the Evangelical movement in Latin America. Even prior to the work of the Bible Societies as such, our earliest missionaries used Bible distribution as their principal method to approach the people of the several countries. One might mention James Thomson, Daniel

* Dr. Northdurft became secretary of the Bible Society Agency in Buenos Aires in 1956

Kidder and R. J. Spaulding. Later men like James C. Fletcher, R. Nesbitt, A. L. Blackford, William Brown, W. Utley, H. C. Tucker, A. M. Milne, Francisco Penzotti and others help to blaze a trail for evangelical missions throughout Latin America. These pioneers were not content simply to serve the Society; they were likewise instrumental in organizing the work of several of the missionary societies on the field. In other words, the initial impact of evangelical witness in Latin America through distribution of the Scriptures and through establishing bridgeheads for missionary advance was due in a large measure to the work of the Bible Societies.

Nor should we be content with past laurels. The Bible Society needs to ask itself if it is maintaining the vision and sense of challenge of the pioneer. Has it tended to become too sophisticated, settled in method and procedure ? Satisfied to do the routine and ordinary ? Does the Society still blaze the trail of missionary endeavour as in the years gone by ? Or has the task of pioneering been left to the churches and missionary societies ? Has some of the flexibility or freedom of the pioneer been lost ? The Society's task is constantly changing, opening up new areas of service, finding new trails for an increasingly effective witness. The old story must be told and re-told in new and challenging ways to capture the imagination and loyalty of an ever-growing constituency. Through acceptance of such a challenge the Bible Societies will continue their outstanding service to the missionary societies on the field and extend their historical significance for years to come.

Promotional assistance

Related to the work of the pioneer is that of promotion and the Bible Society has been a good promoter. New ideas for presentation and distribution of the Scriptures are greatly appreciated by the missionary societies on the field, since these help to increase the effectiveness of the entire programme.

Colourful and imaginative literature aids promotion. The Illustrated Gospels in magazine form have been a blessing. I had the privilege of organizing three new churches in my last term of missionary service. Two of them began as storefront churches. It was all rather a new experience to me and I hardly knew how to begin. But after surveying the area I initiated a programme of visitation and preaching. The response was negligible. Then I stopped preaching and that helped. I started a series of Bible studies, using the Illustrated Gospels and Acts, giving each person a copy for personal use. They were thrilled with their acquisition. They saw the Scriptures opened for the first time in a way they could understand. Some carried their copy along to work, to read during the lunch hour and to share with others. As we studied together week after week, things began to happen. The number increased as interest grew. One church was located in a very poor area of the city, and these people, after learning of the problems in the formation of the Early Church, suddenly realised that there was hope for them too. The implications of Christ's teachings became clearer. One day a member came saying that she and her husband had been married by the civil magistrate and wanted to be married in the church. Since they had three children, I had assumed that they were married before, but the common law arrangement is typical. I asked how they had happened to decide on marriage and was told that after studying together the Gospels it just seemed to be the necessary thing to do. Several who had the reputation of being among the "not so good" people of the area became new people, willing always to go the second mile to serve their fellow men. A women's society was organised with classes in sewing

etc. The church became a growing concern. We were thrilled again to learn of the power of God unto salvation. The use of the Illustrated Gospels was basic to our progress.

Preacher and Colporteur

One of the most significant contributions the Bible Societies have made to the programme of the missionary societies is through their work as preacher and colporteur. Through the years the Bible Societies have preached their message not of changing theological interpretations but rather of reminding all of the Author and Creator of life, of the constancy of his love. They remind all the missionary societies of the biblical basis of our common faith. This reminder helps us to make one of the finest contributions to every missionary programme in that it encourages co-operation. No other organisation enjoys the respect and prestige which the Bible Society enjoys for its ability to bring the various missionary groups together. It makes the Bible Societies' task an even more thrilling experience. The Societies have created an atmosphere of understanding and confidence in many areas where otherwise it would probably not exist. They have been aware of the fact that no programme of missionary endeavour can be built upon distrust and misunderstanding and last for long. Nowhere more than on the mission field is that more keenly felt and it is often our national brethren who insist on such a comprehensive point of view rather than the missionary representatives who may prefer at times to follow established patterns of denominational organisations. As the Bible Societies respect the right of the missionary societies to proclaim their message, the same missionary societies can be helped to see the importance of respecting each other.

In this regard, too, the Bible Societies' colporteur has made a significant contribution to the missionary societies. Despite his denominational affiliation he is heartily accepted and in fact welcomed and solicited for the fine work he does. Probably more significant is the fact that this type of work has been copied by many missionaries to open new work or to expand existing programmes. Those societies which do not have colporteurs as such are at least developing programmes of evangelism based upon Scripture sales and distribution. In other words, the pioneering colporteur's work is not a contribution of the past. Missionary societies are aware of his value and he is much in demand. All are encouraged by the Bible Societies' efforts in the Penzotti Institute to adapt the programme and prepare personally for this all-important phase of the work.

By reviewing their own programme introspectively the Bible Societies can not only maintain their own balanced programme but can likewise offer a deeper sense of purpose and direction to the missionary societies they serve.

Friend and Counsellor

The Bible Societies, serving the several missionary societies as they do, are in a unique position to be counsellor and friend. They speak of honesty, reliability and solidarity. Their integrity cannot be denied. The Bible House is often a meeting place of different people and groups where ideas can be exchanged. I have enjoyed and benefited by conversations at the Bible House offices. The Society can be a good listener and a good Barnabas, and thus give encouragement and counsel to the missionary societies. This function should never be neglected as it adds stature to the Bible Society and its work. The Society represents genuineness. I am reminded of a railroad station which I once saw in Cochabamba some years ago. The Cochabambinos used to point it out with great pride. It

was a large building which followed the general outline of a locomotive. All was well until someone enquired about the railroad. At that time there were only about 35 Kms. of track. All station and no railroad ! The Bible Society does not overlook the importance of the station, but its task, first and foremost, is to speak of the "Way". All who work for the Society should remember that external display or presentation must be a truthful reflection of what we are. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he". The Society has been firm in demanding prompt payment of accounts. Where it has been equally fair in discounts and services its integrity has been equally established. In this respect it has taught the same lesson to the missionary societies. As in every case, it can best demand responsibility where it has proved itself responsible. As friend and counsellor the Bible Societies have shown the missionary societies the way to an increasingly superior witness.

The translator

It goes without saying that one of the most effective pieces of work by the Bible Societies has been Scripture translation. That is not to say that it has been a one-way service. Many missionaries in Latin America have given of themselves in the service of translation for the Bible Societies. Nevertheless, it has been the Bible Societies that have channelled their efforts and given encouragement where needed in order to get the Scriptures into the hands of the people in their own language.

No one can deny the great saving for the missionary society, financial and otherwise, because of the service rendered by the Bible Societies in translations throughout Latin America. At times the missionary societies may seem to take for granted the benefits derived from Bible Society work but I do not feel that they lack appreciation for what is being done.

Just recently a group of Toba Indians came to our Buenos Aires office asking that the Scriptures be translated into their dialect. Some mission groups do not realise the extent of translations still to be done, or the expense involved, but the missionary societies with which I am acquainted in Latin America generally speaking are giving credit where credit is due. They are aware of the fact that there are many problems and are extremely grateful for the Bible Societies' service in translating the Scriptures into the local languages.

As Visitor and Evangelist

The Bible Societies, through their representatives, have been able to spearhead their activities in an area where the Bible becomes the instrument of evangelism for the missionary society. Someone has said that the Societies' function is similar to that of a catalytic agent. We are working to stimulate Bible distribution within and through the churches. In a sense the Society is a catalyst, but it is more. The Society not only assists in the reaction, it is also a very definite part of the action. The Bible Society is missionary in that it is deeply interested and immersed in the programme of taking the Bible to the people in their own language. The Bible Society has been an evangelist for the missionary societies and there is no more effective witness than that personal contact in which the Word is given and explained to an eager listener who is probably hearing the message for the first time.

I recently read an article written in Spain, advising Roman Catholics to avoid certain practices. A list of principal enemies was given and heading the list was the Bible Society. There alone is proof enough of the contribution being made to the missionary societies in Latin America. Henry S. Canby, of "The Saturday

Review", recently said that the English Bible is dying and is losing, or has already lost, power over the imagination unexampled in history. Fred K. Stamm says that "the Bible is not actually lost but it is almost unknown. He is a rare person who has spent much time with it." Not so in Latin America, for there one finds a real thirst for the Scriptures—once a person is reached by a few insights into its message. Propaganda has been rampant against it in many areas, but once its pages are opened its impact is as vivid as the evangelism of the Apostles of the Early Church. It is for that reason that the Bible Society as a visitor and evangelist co-operates with and serves the missionary society in this great task of personal evangelism and is doing such a significant work.

A costly venture

As one lifts thoughts out of the past he realises how much effort has been made, the sacrifices of the pioneers of yester year, the increased costs of printing and production, the time and work required to do the work well, but he may forget that this matter of telling the good news has always been a costly venture. It cost Christ his life on the cross. The Spaniard reminds us that "quien quiere celeste que le cueste" (he who wants the best must pay the price). That is not only a good rule for a business man; it is an excellent motto for a Bible Society, or for any Christian, for that matter.

Our enemy in all Latin America is not Roman Catholicism, any more than we are their enemy. Rather our common enemy is secularism—a secular society which has lost sight of spiritual reality. John Q. Public may even nod assent to the Church, but he has become so immersed in a materialistic culture that the real implications of Christ's teachings are alien to him. Plutarch, as you remember, had a story of a man who tried to make a corpse stand up; but everything he tried failed. He finally gave up in despair, declaring "there must be something lacking inside"—and so it is in our world ! Too many people are trying to make this outer shell of materialistic existence hold them up; but their wealth, their pride and conceit, only serve to prove their ultimate weakness. There is something lacking inside—a need which we in the Bible Society can help to meet. We have the word which gives dynamic strength, stature and meaning to life.

Any appraisal of the Bible work in Latin America will have to state that a great job has been, and is being. done but that there is still "mucha tierra para poseer".

Bible Society Work in Latin America—Its Significance For the World-Wide Task

P. A. Collyer

WHETHER OR NOT THE CHURCH in Latin America can be said to be more directly the result of wide Scripture distribution than is the case for the church in other countries or areas, is difficult if not impossible to determine. Suffice it to say that here is a strong, vigorous, growing church and that the wide distribution of the Scriptures has been a major if not the most important factor in its establishment, growth and evangelistic zeal.

The spread of the Gospel in Latin America

It was an unfortunate decision which the Edinburgh Conference in 1910 took, not to include Latin America in the area to be considered as mission fields for the reason that it had already received the Gospel. That decision was wrong and has worked great harm for Latin America and for the rest of the world. It has isolated Latin America from the main stream of Christian thought, action and fellowship; and has cut off from the world the rich contribution which Latin America could have made. The church as a whole and the Bible Societies in particular will now do well to examine carefully what has been accomplished and is being done in Latin America, for it has much to teach the world. This is especially true as it concerns wide Scripture distribution. Cut off from ecumenical movements, theological thinking and complex organisational structure, Latin American churches and missions have gone about their task of winning men to Christ by direct evangelism with emphasis on the distribution and use of little Gospel portions. And Latin America has seen more success come from its efforts than can be measured in any other comparable area. This is significant and the whole world needs to know about it. Now that the walls of isolation are beginning to fall, there can and must be a sharing in both directions which will bring a blessing to all.

To become a Christian in Latin America is to become a witness. Every believer is expected to be a missionary to his family, friends, neighbours, associates in his daily work. Many go farther and stand in the market place or visit the villages as they give their testimony. Not all, but the majority, use the Scriptures constantly. Many of these new Christians are poorly educated and would find it difficult or impossible to explain their conversion. They simply know that passages of the Scriptures have spoken to their hearts. So they open the Scriptures as they witness and let the Scriptures say for them what they cannot say themselves. The little Gospel portion becomes not just a tool of evangelism—it is the missionary itself. And the believer serves to introduce the missionary and to commend it.

Presentation of the Scriptures

Of the total circulation in Latin America during 1956, 88.6% was in portions. This compares with 75.6% for the world. Except for India and Ceylon and

South-East Asia, Latin America has a higher percentage of portion distribution than any other area. And this is not because the whole Bible is not available. It is because emphasis is placed on Gospel portions as the best evangelists. Furthermore, experience supports the belief that the distribution of Testaments and Bibles will find a natural and certain increase in response to need as the little portions do their work of creating interest and whetting spiritual appetites.

For these reasons, Latin America is trying to make the presentation of the portions as attractive as possible. The illustrated portions and the Sermon on the Mount are well known. During the past five years we have prepared and distributed millions of Christmas stories and Easter stories, published as separate portions. The passage is brief; the type is large; special seasonal covers have been designed each year. On the last page is a statement that this story is only a brief passage from the whole Gospel and that copies of the Gospel can be obtained at the Bible Society depot. The response has been tremendous so far as circulation is concerned, the editions running to 750,000 copies for each item in one year. But now the demand is decreasing. Apparently the novelty of a seasonal item has worn off. But the demand for the shorter passage—whether an excerpt from a Gospel or one of the shorter books published separately—continues. It would seem that the response has been not so much to the seasonal nature of the items published, as to the large readable type, the attractive and fresh cover designs year by year, and to the brief passage that could easily be read in one sitting. These and other means are being used to present the Scriptures in such a way that people will be drawn to them and will want them simply because of their attractiveness; will read them and re-read them because of their legibility; will want more because of the good experience they have had in their initial contact with the Scriptures. How important the first impression is! How we need to keep this primary tool of evangelism sharp, clean and adapted to changing situations and needs.

There is no escaping the fact that such a presentation of the Scriptures is more costly; that perhaps some selling prices may need to be increased; and that as a result circulation may decrease at least temporarily. It seems to us that reader-hours are as important as total circulation. Any decrease in circulation is to be regretted. If, however, a temporary and minor circulation decrease is the price that must be paid to achieve more reading of the volumes that are distributed, the price is probably not too high to pay.

Reaching the masses

Latin America is nominally Christian and Roman Catholic. Actually it is predominantly secular and materialistic. The percentage of persons effectively related to the Church of Rome and receiving its ministries with some degree of regularity, is no more than 25% in any country and is from 8% to 15% in most countries. Evangelism in Latin America is not proselytism. It is not the devout within the Roman fold who comprise the thousands who are now finding Christ and joining the evangelical churches. It is the pagan, unevangelised, unredeemed masses who are hearing and reading the Gospel for the first time. These people know the name of Jesus and Mary and perhaps a few words of Christian vocabulary, which have always been a part of their culture. And for this very reason they provide perhaps the most fertile soil for missionary evangelism.

The significance of Bible Society achievement

The significance of Bible Society achievements in Latin America would seem to be that comparable results might be expected in other countries of similar conditions, if work there were undertaken with the same zeal and perhaps employing many of the methods used in Latin America. Wherever great numbers of people are as secular, materialistic and anti-clerical as are the masses in Latin America, there is fertile ground for intensive sowing of the seed. Adequate supplies of Scriptures, attractive in format and cover design, translated into today's vernacular, distributed intensively with emphasis on the distribution of Gospel portions, and directed and encouraged by competent enthusiastic field men who will relate the work to the churches, so that it becomes central to the whole life and ministry of the church and filters into lay thinking and action: cannot such a pattern of service accomplish elsewhere what it has accomplished in Argentina, in Mexico, in Venezuela and Colombia ?

Much still to be done

Glowing as are the reports of accomplishment in Latin America, there still remains much to be done. If the population should remain static, at the present rate of distribution it will take thirty years to place just one copy of the Scriptures in the hand of every person and six hundred years to place one Bible in every home. But the population is not static. In the thirty years it will proabbly have doubled, or more.

To reach all of Latin America **now** means that the amount of support must be greatly increased. This will require a broader base of support. The churches of Latin America must be helped to see that they must provide much more than they are now providing even though their contributions have increased substantially in recent years. But this will not be enough. The United States and England, which have borne the major burden of support in the past, must broaden their base of giving to provide even larger contributions. But even this will not be enough. Other churches and other countries must give their rightful share. Though the Edinburgh Conference said to the churches of Europe that their missionary support and work must be directed toward Asia and Africa, Christ said we should go into all the world, to be witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth. The Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council has called us to initiative and mobility. It suggested that re-direction of traditional efforts may now be in order and that new effort in new fields may be required.

The Bible Societies have traditionally followed the missionaries of the churches of their countries. But part of the genius of the Bible Societies has been their pioneering emphasis. Cannot the Bible Societies of the Scandinavian countries and of Germany lead the way for European witnessing in LatinAmerica? Perhaps the churches of those countries will follow after if the Bible Societies will lead the way.

But what of Asia and Africa ? What of the mission field in Europe itself, and in England and Scotland and North America ? Are these fields to be neglected in order that Latin America may be more adequately served ? The answer to these questions is "No". These fields must not be neglected. They must be served and more adequately than at present. Today is the day of opportunity in India, in Africa, in Indonesia. At the same time it is important that the work in these areas should not be increased at the expense of the work in Latin America. The demands of the hour require larger support for all fields and this requires a broader base of support and more generous giving from every quarter.

Strategy for an expanding field

If we were concerned only with today, our strategy might be different. But we look to tomorrow and must plan our strategy accordingly. We have already spoken of the need for a broader base of support for the world-wide task. Latin America has the greatest potential for future support of the world mission of the churches and the Bible Societies. Here is the most promising area for broadening the base for large support in future years.

It is one of the few under-populated areas of the world, but it is filling up rapidly and may in a century support five hundred million people. Its natural resources are abundant and virtually unexploited. The cultural heritage and institutions of the people are more conducive to the growth of a strong evangelical community than in any other major area of the world. The tide of Christian faith and life is moving across the area.It needs only to be urged and helped along to the day when Latin America will be truly Christian. Already the missionary motive fills the hearts of countless thousands. Consider what it will mean to the missionary movement twenty, fifty years, a century hence, what it will mean by way of resources, of personnel and funds for use in other areas, if Latin America can be won for Christ in this generation. The tremendous resources of this continent may well become the backbone of support for the world mission, provided the people who populate the continent have heard the Gospel, have developed a sense of Christian stewardship and have extended their missionary horizons. Such a development will depend in large measure upon increased effort here and now in the total missionary enterprise and particularly in the work of the Bible Societies. Increased effort in Latin America now is the best guarantee for continuing work in Asia and Africa tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

The significance of Bible Society work in Latin America beyond its importance in bringing Latin America to Christ—and that, of course, is its greatest significance—lies in the lessons it teaches regarding effective techniques of the work; lies in the demonstration that the Gospel portion does not need to be buttressed by ponderous theologies to be effective in bringing the masses to the Way, the Truth and the Life; lies in its challenge for the work in other areas nominally Christian; and lies in its potential as a future base for missionary service to the world. What we sow in Latin America today will bring its harvest of blessing throughout the world tomorrow.

Latin American Impressions

E. H. Robertson

THE FIRST EXCITEMENT in Brazil of finding a Protestant cause growing more rapidly than anywhere else in the world may lead to an uncritical viewing of the situation there. The picture is exciting. A discredited Catholic Church is breaking up and the rapid movement of population, the tearing up of roots, the growth of mammoth cities, are all encouraging the break-up. I would do nothing to take away the glory of those who are preaching in this situation and daily winning men for Christ. No moment in my whole visit to Latin America was more thrilling to me than when I sat in a poor home in Parana and learnt from a simple lay Christian how every man in the evangelical churches in Brazil is an evangelist. Right across the coffee country of Brazil the Protestant Church is spreading like a prairie fire.

But two things give me cause for alarm. First, the immense strength of the Spiritists. There are ten million of them in Brazil and they are settling on the decaying Roman Catholic Church like vultures on a corpse. All over the country, the Spiritists are gaining more people than all the Protestant churches put together. My second concern is for the great losses from the Protestant churches. As one Baptist minister said to me, "The door out of the church is as wide as the door in!" So long as evangelism is sufficiently active and men are pouring into the churches, it is possible to ignore the losses and that is what is being done. The people lost to the churches are finding their way into spiritism and secularism, from whence it is more difficult to win them back. Equally disturbing is the effect of all this on the churches themselves. They are becoming unbalanced. Evangelism they have learnt; but there is little grounding in the faith and very little deep Bible study. All the apparatus of Sunday School work on the American pattern is there, but this is instruction and not an exposing of the people to the Word of God. The Bible is read and information about it is taught, but it is no longer, or perhaps never was, used as a guide for living.

What began as a concern in Brazil was emphasised in Argentina and in many other South American countries. In Argentina the Brethren, traditionally Bible students, have also neglected this side of their work. The result is that a reformed Catholic Church is sending better informed students to the university than are the Brethren. Young Catholics are out-arguing young Brethren. Steps are now being taken to rectify this and it is important that they should be, because the Brethren represent the largest Protestant body in Argentina.

In almost every country in Latin America there is evidence that the Pentecostal churches are growing rapidly and appear to be most at home in this kind of atmosphere. They suit the Latin temperament and although their losses are also alarmingly great, they seem to provide the ideal form of Protestantism for people who lose confidence in the priests. Especially in Chile, but also in other countries, the uninhibited worship seems to be necessary for the ex-Catholic Latin. Catholicism had provided him with an opportunity for highly individual worship which can still be observed going on in Catholic churches even during Mass. It also gave him excitement and noise in its religious pageants. There seems little that is religious in these Catholic pageants, but to many they are deeply associated with religion and allow for the release of emotion. Pentecostal worship contains all these elements. The people are much more at home as they shout their prayers, raise their arms and give themselves up to adoration, regardless of what the preacher is doing. In contrast, the worship in the classical forms of Protestantism is cold and formal. The poorest and the simplest people are not at home with that God or those forms of worship. The Pentecostal form is natural to them and its uninhibited worship is impressive. Unfortunately this is accompanied by a form of preaching that makes little serious use of the Bible. Certain groups realise the seriousness of this and the Assemblies of God have an all out attempt to back their work with Bible study and the training of their pastors in a series of simple, but good, Bible schools. Unless the Pentecostals can develop this side, they are preparing people for Spiritism or some other sub-Christian form of religion.

The greatest need in Latin America to-day seems to me to be a solid and serious Bible study adapted to the habits of the people. Without it a great Protestant advance will run out into the sands; with it, a way may be found to win a whole continent for Christ. The Bible must become a guide for living if all is not to be lost.

The Task of Scripture Distribution in Latin America

Report of the Special Committee of the Latin American Secretaries' Conference, Sao Paulo, Brazil, July 1957

THE MEETINGS OF THE U.B.S. COUNCIL and Conference in Brazil have provided occasion for the holding of a Staff Conference of Bible Society workers from throughout Latin America. Immediately preceding the U.B.S. meetings the secretaries, sub-agents and project leaders from all the agencies, together with headquarters secretaries from New York and London and the General Secretary of the U.B.S., met for eight days in Sao Paulo to review the past and plan for the future. The opportunity to join in the U.B.S. meetings has enabled us to see our task more clearly in the total world setting and also to share our experiences and sense of urgency with colleagues from other areas of the world.

Though Latin America has its distinctive characteristics, it is experiencing with many other areas rapid increase in population and literacy, profound social and economic changes, a growing secularism, increasing costs of living and nationalistic tendencies in several countries. We are deeply concerned that the increases in Scripture Circulation are not keeping pace with increases in population and literacy. We are concerned that in some countries, particularly Brazil, the supply of Scriptures is not adequate to meet the needs of a rapidly growing church. The church to-day is forty times as large as it was forty years ago. The wide distribution of the Scriptures has been a major factor, if not the most important factor, in this remarkable growth. The evident effectiveness of Scripture distribution as an evangelistic technique when considered alongside the inadequate supplies and the limited proportionate circulation compel us to search for increased support and better patterns of service. The economic, political and sociological factors inherent in Latin American life to-day impose upon us a sense of urgency in our task and time.

We are not unaware of the needs and urgency in all parts of the world. We hope that Latin America may speedily undertake to share in meeting the whole world's needs for adequate supplies and effective distribution and use of the Scriptures. We believe that Latin America provides the greatest new potential both in funds and in personnel for meeting the world's needs in the decades immediately ahead. For this reason, and because our work is in Latin America, our attention has been devoted primarily to this area.

Present Situation

The Bible was first brought to Latin America in the sixteenth century by Catholic missionaries, some of whom were intent upon establishing in America a spiritual utopia, a new church unburdened by the abuses and immoralities of the old order in Europe. Their bright dream died, however, under the feet of the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors who saw in the new continent only an opportunity for economic self-aggrandizement. In this ambition their church largely supported them. In following centuries others, including European and American tradesmen, brought the Holy Scriptures to Latin America, but it was not until 1818, with the work of James Thompson, intrepid and ubiquitous agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, that the Bible began to be known in Latin America. The slow infiltration which characterized its first introduction has now reached the proportions of a flood of Scripture distribution, accounting for one-fourth of the total circulation by the Bible Societies of the world, or more than six million units annually.

The growth of the evangelical church has paralleled the increase in Scripture circulation. Indeed, the growth of the church and the growth of Scripture circulation may truly be said to be mutually explanatory, one accounting for the other. The Scriptures and their use pervade the entire life of the church in Latin America to-day. Members bring their own Bibles to all church gatherings. The Scriptures form the basis of the preaching and teaching ministry. They are used to an increasing extent in evangelism, and by means of various kinds of distribution programs, in extending the influence of the church and the knowledge of the Gospel into the community and unevangelized areas. The demand for Scriptures is becoming so great that the present supply in many countries is inadequate to meet all needs.

The Latin American countries are comparatively young republics. They have reached maturity within the present generation. They are only recently beginning to participate to an important extent in world affairs. They are presently engaged in a period of rapid industrialization and commercial expansion. Their populations are growing rapidly. Considering their circumstances, one may paraphrase the words of the founding fathers of the American Bible Society, as they contemplated their own responsibility, and view with grave concern "the disastrous consequences" to these young republics of growing into maturity "without the knowledge of the words of eternal life". Competent observers believe, therefore, that the Church in Latin America, and the Bible Society, are now at a place of critical significance as they face their present task.

The Bible Societies and the Church

The evangelical church is now firmly rooted in the life and the culture of Latin America. It is developing in many respects its own distinctive interpretation and mode of expression of the evangelical Christian faith. The Bible Society agencies in Latin America are therefore especially concerned that their organization and service be truly expressive of the life of the Latin American church. This concern manifests itself in several ways. There is a search for a closer and more mutually helpful co-operation with the churches in their work of distributing the Scriptures. There is a growing awareness that the communication of the Gospel, whether by proclamation or by distribution of the printed word, is primarily the church's task. In the past the church in Latin America has been too weak to bear a great part of this task without foreign aid and direction. The churches are now, however, more mature, more able, and can from their own ranks provide capable leadership. From their own resources they can and should provide a greater measure of financial support for the work of Scripture distribution. The agencies of the Bible Societies, therefore, are convinced that there must be a planned and increasing utilization of indigenous leadership, wisdom and resources. To this end, ways must be discovered of helping the churches to recognize the work of the Bible Societies as their responsibility. National Advisory Councils and regional auxiliaries have been organized and local church representatives of the Bible Society have been recruited for this purpose. In two countries steps are being taken towards the forming of national Bible Societies in due time and under the proper circumstances.

The rooting of Bible Society work in the life of the national church is complicated by a factor not unknown in other parts of the world. As has been stated, the Latin American republics are comparatively young and have only recently participated to a large extent in international affairs. This has given them a heightened national consciousness which is more and more frequently reflected in the life and affairs of the church. The growing importance of leadership by nationals in all branches of the church is a welcome development, but it also marks a transition requiring great wisdom on the part both of nationals and the co-operating foreign agencies which still supply the larger part of the financial support. This growing self-realization on the part of the national church is a healthy development and can be utilized to attract the best leadership and a stronger financial support to the work of the Bible Societies. Purely nationalistic sentiments, however, are contrary to the main goal which should motivate the communication of the Gospel, namely a world brotherhood in Christ. The agencies of the Bible Societies feel, therefore, that nationalistic sentiments should be exploited only with the greatest of care. There must be encouraged within the churches and Bible Society councils a sense of fellowship with churches and Bible Societies in every nation and area, in the common task of world evangelism. Each co-operating agency and Society must provide its full potential of leadership, wisdom and funds for achieving our one goal that all men may have the Word of God in their own language in a form they can easily read and understand and at a price they can afford to pay.

The Task Ahead

As the agencies of the Bible Societies in Latin America consider their present task, several aspects of the work are found to be of immediate and urgent concern.

(*a*) First and most important is the need to provide an adequate supply of Scriptures of all types to keep pace with the expanding needs of a rapidly growing church. Of the seven agencies in Latin America, five reported that their work was restricted by a lack of a continuous supply of Scriptures. The situation is especially critical in Brazil due on the one hand to the great and growing circulation of Scriptures by the churches, and on the other hand the shortage is due to increasing difficulties of importation. It is estimated by the secretary of the Bible Society of Brazil that the present supply can fill only two-thirds of the demand. Restrictions upon importation are found to be present in several countries. It is therefore urgent that the possibilities for publication of Scriptures in each country be explored and, if necessary, printing facilities and technical assistance provided, so that if the supply from the outside is cut off, production of Scriptures may begin within the country without undue confusion and delay.

(*b*) In order for the Bible Societies to provide the greatest measure of help to the churches in their work of Scripture distribution, and also to provide for an orderly transition to national leadership, a program of training of Bible Society personnel has been set up in the "Francisco G. Penzotti Institute", located in Mexico. The purpose of this training program, which was instituted in October, 1956, is to prepare a select group of young men for the important task of promoting and organizing the work of Scripture distribution by the laity of the churches. Three young men have already completed the nine months' course of specialized training. They have now returned to their own countries, Cuba, Mexico and Argentina, respectively, and are actively engaged in assisting the agency secretaries in stimulating and guiding the laymen of the churches in a wider and more effective distribution and use of the Scriptures. The services of the Institute need to be expanded and improved.

(*c*) If the churches are to understand the work of the Bible Societies and are to support it according to their means and ability, the work and their responsibility must be interpreted to them in terms they best comprehend. It is important that they be informed not only about their local agency or Society but also about the world service of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES. Both printed and audio-visual materials are required to stimulate and instruct in the processes of distribution, to encourage and guide in the use of the Scriptures, and to promote support of the work. These are needed for churches, Bible schools, seminaries and other organizations and institutions in or related to the churches. It is not only desirable but imperative that such materials be prepared within the area and probably by nationals of the area if they are to be most effective.

(*d*) The Scriptures must be offered in the best translations possible. To this end two kinds of translation work are in process or under consideration. One is the revision of the historic standard versions which have come to be central in the spiritual culture and life of the churches. A revision of the Portuguese version has been completed and is being prepared for publication. The revision of the Spanish Reina-Valera version is nearing the final stages of proof-reading and will probably be published during 1958. Plans have also been made for a critical translation into present-day Spanish based upon the best Hebrew and Greek texts. It is not intended that this latter translation shall supplant the Reina-Valera Version but that it shall serve a need for such a translation among a growing constituency of theological students, pastors and discerning laymen. In order to serve a constituency of quite another type, the large and increasing number of new literates, a special translation into simple Spanish, scaled to the vocabulary of those of limited reading ability, is in process. Portions of this New Testament have been published in Mexico and introduced.

Several hundred languages and dialects are spoken by Indian communities of varying sizes throughout Latin America. Translation work is progressing in many of these languages and must be continued until every group of significant size has at least one Gospel in its own language. The assistance of trained linguists at present stationed in the area, who consult with translators as they are preparing the translations, is considered to be of inestimable value in guaranteeing that the texts published will be both accurate and understandable.

The Challenge

We see Latin America and also Asia and Africa to-day as aptly described by the hymn writer as "nations in commotion, prepared for Zion's war". The battle will not wait for to-morrow; it is upon us now. We note that our colleagues in Asia gathered for a Staff Conference at Bandung, Indonesia, in September 1956, have seen the same needs and opportunities and have sensed the same urgency that we have seen and felt. We further note that their vision has not been limited to any nation or area. Our word to them is that we too refuse to be blinded by boundaries. The whole world needs more Scriptures; it needs more and better services from all Bible Societies. We would challenge the Bible Societies of which we are a part and all Bible Societies, we would challenge the churches and individuals who provide support and personnel to do more, to do enough, and to do it now. We ask not for Latin America alone, but we do ask for Latin America that there be no tarrying in supplying the great need. An ounce of investment now in Latin America will in God's good providence yield pounds of returns for Christian world missions and the wider distribution of the Scriptures to-morrow.

News From All The World

Austria

Baron F.L.S.F. van Tuyll van Serooskerken, General Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society, was the speaker at the annual Bible Sunday organised in Vienna by the *Austrian Bible Committee*. For many years that Society has invited Bible Society leaders from other countries for this occasion. The address, given by Baron van Tuyll to an audience of some 500 people, was entitled "The Bible as missionary". While in Vienna he also spoke to a one-day conference of the Bible Committee on, "The Bible Society — how I view it".

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Bible distribution in Austria in 1956 was more than twice that for the previous year. The figure of course includes the distribution of Hungarian Bibles, New Testaments and Portions — about 70,000 Hungarian Scriptures alone being distributed. The Bible Society colporteurs and various Christian organisations shared the work of distribution of Hungarian Scriptures and a great number were also sent out from Bible House in Vienna. Recently consignments have been sent, with the approval of the B. F. B. S. and A. B. S., direct to Hungary. These have all arrived safely and have been put to good purpose.

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Bishop Ordass was in Vienna some months ago and paid a visit to Bible House. He took the occasion of expressing his special thanks to the Bible Societies for the great help which had been offered to the Hungarian people. He, in the company of other bishops, theologians and representatives of the Hungarian Church, visited the Bible House library.

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The people of Austria this year chose Dr. Adolf Schärf as the country's President. Dr. Schärf has already accepted two invitations to special celebrations of the Bible Society. In 1950, when he was Vice-Chancellor of the Austrian government he was present at the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Bible Society work in Austria, and in 1954 he attended the opening of the Bible House.

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Thirty Austrian children arranged a collection recently in order to provide ten African children with a free copy of the Bible. This effort met with an encouraging response.

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During the course of the years a large number of meetings of young people have taken place in the library of the Bible House. All the groups have been much interested in the problem of Bible translation and Bible distribution, and have taken the opportunity of examining copies of the Scriptures which are on view in many different languages.

Belgium

Six years ago the *Belgian Bible Society* published its first edition of the Segond Bible. It is reported that since then 120,000 copies have been produced in ordinary and luxury editions. These Scriptures have had a wide distribution all in French speaking areas, especially the edition on India paper, which has always been in great demand. The Belgian Bible Society plans a new edition of 50,000 - 60,000 for the beginning of 1958.

The Society also plans to produce an edition of 200,000 Gospels, Segond version, and of 25,000 NewTestaments for colportage use, the last edition of which, printed in 1953, is almost out of print.

In order to increase its working capital for production, so as to be in a position to deal with the growing demand, the Belgian Bible Society is launching an urgent appeal to its supporters in Belgium and is organising a competition in order to draw in new subscribers to the work of the Society.

Canada

The Rev. Dr. W. J. Platt, General Secretary of the B.F.B.S., spent the month of October in Canada, carrying out an extensive deputation tour of the Western Auxiliaries of the B.F.B.S. in Canada. On this occasion his tour took him to British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec.

At Regina, Saskatchewan, he saw the new Bible House building in the last stages of its construction. In this two-storey building — now in use — the Bible store and offices occupy the first floor, the second being rented. The basement has a special board room and storage facilities. The B.F.B.S. in London is contributing one third of the cost of the Regina Bible House. Meanwhile the Rev. Kenneth G. McMillan, General Secretary of the B.F.B.S. in Canada, has been touring the Eastern Provinces doing extensive deputation visits and interviewing members of the Boards in the Maritimes.

China

Scripture sales are increasing in China, according to reports which reached Hongkong recently. There is a great demand for reference Bibles. Members of the Hungarian church delegation which visited China last September were also impressed by the large numbers of Scriptures on sale there and by the importance given to the Bible in church life.

England

The B.F.B.S. has just published the Gospel of Mark in Avikam, a dialect spoken by a tribe on the Ivory Coast, numbering over 18,000. The translation was made by the Rev. Jean-Claude Fermaud of the Methodist Church, with the help of a committee of seven nationals. This is the first portion of the Bible to be published in this language.

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Another recent production of the B. F. B. S. is a new translation of the New Testament in Tswana (Chuana), a language spoken by tribes in central Bechuanaland. It is in the new orthography as approved by the Transvaal, and this translation has been done by missionaries of the Herrmannsburg mission and Dutch Reformed Church.

Two week-end conferences for laymen were arranged by the B.F.B.S. last November, one at Eastbourne, in the south of England, and the other at Ilkley, in the north. In each case biblical scholars of repute were invited to give lectures on their respective fields of knowledge. At Eastbourne Canon Eric Heaton gave a survey of the prophetic books and their significance as the Word of God, while the Rev. Kenneth Grayston took New Testament themes dealing particularly with the rich associations of meaning which a term such as "the Word" presents in the Gospel of John; he also gave a lecture on the development of the Canon of New Testament Scriptures. At Ilkley Dr. Martin Niemöller gave the incisive and challenging message which one has come to expect from him. At both gatherings staff members contributed as chaplains and lectured on various

aspects of Bible Society work, though the main emphasis was on Bible study, and the sessions were in the hands of lay chairmen throughout. Attendance at each gathering was between 70 and 80.

From the beginning of the B.F.B.S. the basis of its support, the shaping of its policy and the general administration have to a large extent been the responsibility of laymen. With the exception of the two General Secretaries, all the members of the General Committee have always been drawn from the laity and the staff, both at home and overseas, includes numerous lay members. Among the Auxiliary officers the emphasis on lay responsibility is at least as strong. In recent years the significance of this fact has led the Society to recognise a particular obligation towards the Christian laity in Britain. In order that an awareness of the relevance and scope of Bible Society activities may be maintained and a supply of keen supporters constantly brought in, the Society has accepted as part of its task some measure of responsibility for biblical education for its lay constituency. The Society has sought to promote study of the Bible itself as a means of stimulating enthusiasm for the wider circulation of the Scriptures which would naturally follow their enhaced appreciation. Ever since the Bible Weeks and similar campaigns carried out at the time of the Third Jubilee, in conjunction with the British Council of Churches, through which much was achieved in this direction, the B.F.B.S. has sought to continue along these lines, with more selective groups of lay supporters, through the agency of the laymen's conferences.

France

A new organisation interested in Scripture distribution has recently been created in the South of France under the title, Gospel Distribution and Missionary Help (Diffusion de l'Evangile et Entr'aide missionnaire). For several years Scripture circulation by means of vouchers had been carried on privately by a number of devoted lay-people, with the help of the *Alliance biblique française* and the Société évangélique in Geneva. This activity having now extended over many French Departments and in French Territories overseas, the need was felt for the creation of a registered organisation. The group has been circulating several thousands of Scriptures annually during the last few years. The work is directed by laymen from different churches.

An evangelistic organisation working in France inserted an announcement in the November issue of the French issue of The Reader's Digest, offering a free copy of the Bible to the first 100 people who applied for it, a free copy of the New Testament to the next 200, and to all subsequent applicants a free Gospel. Within five days after the publication of the announcement, over 1,500 replies had been received through the post, and after three weeks about 6,000.

When the organisers realised what a tremendous response their announcement was having, they decided to offer copies of the Bible and New Testament, on payment but if possible at a reduced price, to those who received a free Gospel through this project. They approached the French Bible Committee, asking whether the latter would be willing to allow a 10% discount on any orders for Bibles or New Testaments which might be received from these people. This request being granted, when the Gospels were despatched to the applicants, a circular was enclosed, including a voucher entitling the applicant to a 10% reduction on the price of any Bible or New Testament he cared to order. Before the end of

November the French Bible Committee had received more than 200 orders for complete Bibles, payment for which had to accompany the order.

Germany

The following information is taken from the annual report of the Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt (Stuttgart Bible Society).

At its annual meeting the *Stuttgart Bible Society* was able to report encouraging progress. It was a fortunate coincidence for the Bible Society that just at the time when the revision of the New Testament was concluded, the reconstruction of the building had been more or less finished and the Society was therefore free to devote itself with renewed vigour to its task of publishing. The demand for the Bible has been surprisingly great during the past year. The Society distributed altogether during the year 1956/57: 378,000 Bibles, 213,000 New Testaments and 220,000 Portions (a total of 811,000 volumes).

Extensive work was also done in the realm of scholarly editions. The consultations over the revision of the Hebrew Old Testament are concluded; fifteen professors, among them one from Holland, two from England, a Swede and a Swiss, have taken over the work of revision which is required in view of the simplification of the critical apparatus and of the evaluation of the Dead Sea discoveries. The Hebrew concordance, prepared seven years ago, is about to be published; with this book a work tool will be put into the hands of the theologian which will facilitate his study of the Old Testament. A new revised edition of the Greek New Testament has appeared. The significant thing was getting acquainted with the newly-discovered second century papyrus of John's Gospel, about which Bulletin No. 30 gave a detailed report. Progress has also been made on the preparations of the Greek synopsis and of a comparison of the four Gospels, undertaken by Prof. D. Aland.

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The Stuttgart Bible Society is going forward with the typographical rearrangement of the Bibles it produces. Having brought out various editions of the New Testament in the Spring of 1957, in modern and pleasing type setting, the Society has now published a complete Bible in Roman type, without verse divisions. It is a pocket edition which is being sold at a very low price. This edition, which is meant for general use, will be used for religious education and also for weddings.

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The Stuttgart Bible Society was particularly active during 1957 in the distribution of missionary Scriptures. In May 5,000 New Testaments were delivered to people on an island in the Pacific Ocean, in the Truk language, produced jointly with the Liebenzell Mission. Two thousand Portions, with coloured pictures, in the Fulani language, are in preparation, for the French Cameroons. These were produced jointly by the Stuttgart Bible Society and the Pfälzische Bible Society. Copies of Mark in the language of the Palau Islands are being printed in Stuttgart for the American Bible Society. Early in 1957 the Stuttgart Bible Society published the third edition of the New Testament in the Kâte language for the Neuendettelsauer Mission, which is at work in New Guinea. A third edition of the New Testament in the Jabem language is also on its way to New Guinea. Pastor D. Vielhauer is working on the translation of the Bali Bible for the Cameroons, in collaboration with the African pastor, Elisa Ndifon.

Bibelwerk, the Federation of the Bible Societies of the German Democratic Republic, held its annual meeting for 1957 at the time of the 140th anniversary of the Bible Society of Eisenach. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Präses Rautenberg, who was re-elected chairman of Bibelwerk for another term. The discussions were introduced by a paper by the Rev. J. Adler, of the Berlin Bible Society, and by the report of Dr. K. Zabel, General Secretary of Bibelwerk. The following notes are taken from a report of the U. B. S. General Secretary who took part in the celebration in Eisenach and in the meeting of Bibelwerk at which he reported on the U. B. S. meetings in Brazil last July. At the close of the meeting Mr. Béguin also had the opportunity of visiting the Bible Societies in Dresden (Bible Society of Saxony), Leipzig and Altenburg.

"The great dearth of Scriptures in Eastern Germany is over", stated Mr. Béguin. "The Bible Societies find it rather difficult, in some cases, to get rid of their products. Whereas for a number of years the demand was still greater than the supply, the time has now come when the demand has to be stimulated.

"This regression is not mainly caused by a saturation of all possible markets. There are vast sections of the population which are not interested in the Word of God. There may be a Bible in each family. It is doubtful whether each individual has his own Bible. To reach that goal is the concern of the Societies. To work out ways and means of attaining it is their problem.

"Various approaches are being tried. In the field of production, first, a greater variety of books is being produced. High results have been achieved from the point of view of the quality of the books. Scriptures now exist in many sizes, many types and in a variety of bindings. Cheap, attractive and short settings of selected passages have also been produced recently in Altenburg, for wide distribution in hospitals, exhibitions, mass meetings etc. Three such settings of selections have so far been produced; one with texts connected with Christmas, one with texts related to Easter and the third specially prepared for sick people. Selections of texts related to one biblical figure — Elijah, Abraham and so on — have also been produced in large type, large format, the first one with illustrations.

"The need for a modern translation is increasingly felt. The Zürich Bible, though useful and produced under licence in the D. D. R., is not widely known and is mainly used by students. The Menge Bible is much in demand. So far, however, no means have been found of producing an edition in the D. D. R. under licence. In the meantime the Berlin Bible Society (E. H. B.) is preparing the publication of a tentative edition of a Gospel in a new translation. The reactions to that project will then help to determine along which lines the idea of a new committee translation could be worked out — possibly on the basis of this existing manuscript. It is in any case clear to everybody that the Luther translation can hardly undergo a further revision and that for evangelistic purposes another text is becoming a necessity.

"The Bible Society of Saxony has also shown much concern for that very need. Under the publishing licence of the E. H.B., they have published the two first instalments of a biblical "paraphrase", prepared by the Rev. Wolfgang Schwabe. This paraphrase is, in the terms of the introduction, "a rendering of the biblical text in the speech of our day. Explanations of historical developments and helps to the understanding of ancient practices and conceptions

have been worked into the text". Matthew and the letter to the Philippians have been issued. It is intended in time to cover the whole Bible in separate instalments. The whole enterprise is meant as a step to facilitate the reading of the Luther Bible. In six months half of the total edition of 10,000 had been sold.

"The particular conditions of the D. D. R. with regard to the production of evangelical literature have led the Bible Societies to take a greater share than would normally be the case in the preparation of *helps to the reader*. The allocation of responsibilities between the only licensed evangelical publishing house and the Bible Societies has left to these the preparation by the E. H. B. of annotated Gospels, of a "family Bible" containing selected passages with brief introductions or summaries of intervening passages, linking the extracts together. Daily Bible readings and one-minute comments have also been produced by the E.H.B. and the Altenburg Bible Society. Books and booklets on and about the Bible and Bible Society work, both in a scholarly and popular style have been published by the E. H. B. One of the last produced was a popular account of the discovery of the Dead Sea manuscripts and of their value, of which a more scholarly study had already been issued two or three years ago. In the same series a translation of Dr. Chirgwin's book on the Bible in world evangelism is now being planned. The Altenburg Bible Society is now working on a Bible with annotations taken from commentaries and sermons of the early Church fathers. This is intended for pastors, catechists and lay preachers.

"The last venture in this field of helps to Bible reading is the publication of a correspondence Bible course. The Bible Societies did not enter this field on their own initiative. The move came as the result of a suggestion made to the Societies by the leaders of the peoples' mission (Volksmission) when the Bible Societies had urged them to give a more prominent place in their ministry to the circulation of the Scriptures and to their use. Since colportage is impossible in the D. D. R., Scripture distribution to the unchurched must be the responsibility of the lay members in the churches. However, too many of them just cannot make anything of the Bible except from seeing in it a revered traditional book. The way for a more effective circulation of the Word of God is that it should first become living for those who possess the Book already but have shelved it. To help people to open, read and understand the Bible is the way to make them Bible missionaries. Hence the stress on "Bible Mission", and, as one of its expressions, the correspondence courses.

"These Bible correspondence courses are, however, only one aspect of the intense activity of the two secretaries, Dr. K. Zabel and the Rev. J. Adler. Both spend most of their time visiting churches, pastoral meetings, church authorities, Sunday School teachers' meetings, pastors' seminaries, conferences of evangelistic leaders, and in trying to create what might be called a 'biblical climate' which would help towards a real and fruitful 'return' to the Bible. There is no other way if the decrease in personal Bible reading is to be checked, if confidence in the power of God's Word, also in relation to present circumstances, is to be restored.

"Fortunately the efforts of these two secretaries and of their Societies are warmly supported by many church leaders and there is an evident readiness on their part to listen, perhaps to be convinced, and even

maybe to be moved to action. That Bible Sunday was placed for the first time on the list of special Sundays in two Landeskirchen last year, and that a good number of churches implemented the recommendation, is but a sign that things may be moving in the right direction. That two or three Landeskirchen last year and again this year were willing to buy large quantities of Testaments or Bibles for free distribution to all the young people who were confirmed (still 85-90% of their year's class) is another sign that church leaders are becoming more effectively Bible conscious."

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"To how many emigrants in the past has the Bible not been a source of comfort and strength, in the uncertainty of their early difficulties and the loneliness of a strange country?" — asks a chaplain to emigrants, in an article on "Emigrants and the Bible" in the issue of November 8th of the Evangelische Pressedienst (Germany). "A farmer in the Middle West of Canada," continues the writer, "speaking of the untold difficulties of his early years as a destitute young emigrant, was given a Bible which he took with him as his only treasure from his homeland. 'And that', he said, 'is the only thing that gave me strength and courage.'

"To-day", writes the chaplain, "the Bible and hymnbook no longer belong as a matter of course to the emigrant. How many still go out with a Bible? We do not know. But when, at the close of an evening service for emigrants, attention was called to the table on which Bibles were lying, not a few hands reached out almost timidly for a Bible or New Testament. The people of today are not against the Bible, but are unfamiliar with and shy of it. There must be something special to cause him to reach out for it".

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Ten thousand Bible Portions have been distributed free, by American pastors and laymen, among Protestant soldiers in the Fourth Division in Mainz. The Commanding Officer of the unit, Major General Herrmann, promised full support to the Americans who undertook this campaign as representatives of the Pocket Testament League. "I have given this promise", wrote General Herrmann in an order to the troops, "because I believe that the soldier needs God's Word as given in the Bible".

Greece

Twenty-two thousand Greek New Testaments were distributed last autumn to recruits of the Greek Army. This service of providing new recruits with the Scriptures has been going on now for several years. Similar arrangements have now been worked out with Air Force officials and Scriptures have also been despatched from New York to the Air Force Chaplain. It is expected that some 6-7,000 a year will be needed for this purpose.

Hongkong

The 150th anniversary of Robert Morrison's arrival in Hongkong was celebrated in various centres there throughout September last. The observance included services at Morrison's grave in the cemetery in Macao and an exhibition of Morrison documents in the library of the University of Hongkong, which produced a special illustrated catalogue for the occasion. This exhibition was opened by His Excellency the Governor of Hongkong and included a copy of the 21-volume Bible translated by Morrison and Milne into Chinese and printed in Malacca in 1823 (loaned by courtesy of the American Bible Society). Lectures were given by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hongkong and Professor H. Kraemer,

and public meetings were held in the various churches of Hongkong and Kowloon. The meetings were well attended, appreciations of Morrison's work were given in the local press and a special feature programme was broadcast over the Hongkong radio.

Hungary

The General Secretary of the United Bible Societies, Mr. Olivier Béguin, following an invitation from the Convent (headquarters) of the Reformed Church in Hungary, spent the first week of November in that country to renew contacts with the church leaders responsible for Bible work. While the Convent of the Reformed Church has been responsible for this, since the B.F.B.S. handed over its work of Scripture production shortly after the war, it is done in close contact with the Hungarian Bible Council, an interdenominational body, which acts in an advisory capacity and carries out a work similar to that of Bible Societies in other countries.

It was not possible at the time of the visit to have a statutory session of the Bible Council, but the U. B. S. Secretary had full opportunity for discussing Bible Society affairs with a group of representatives of the main denominations met together for the occasion. Particular concern was shown for the problem of "Bible mission" and the report on experiences in that field in Eastern Germany attracted special interest. The desire was also voiced for a greater variety in the Scripture editions published in Hungary. Deep gratitude was expressed for the paper received from Societies abroad, which greatly helped in responding to the need for Scriptures.

The U.B.S. General Secretary was also received, along with the Director of the Convent, the Rev. G. Muraközy, by the President of the Government department for religious affairs, His Excellency Dr. J. Horvath, who confirmed the authorisation to print a total of 100,000 Bibles in 1958 (to cover also the unmet needs of 1957). It was also indicated that should the foreign Societies be willing to give the necessary help, an average of 50,000-60,000 Bibles could be printed yearly. This quantity would be sufficient to provide young people with a copy of the Scriptures at the conclusion of their confirmation classes and as they entered fully into church membership.

A visit was also paid to the printing plant in Pécs, where Hungarian Bibles have been produced during the last few years, and tentative plans were worked out for the 1958 production programme.

Thanks to gifts of Scriptures sent in by the Lutheran World Federation, most of the new communicants of the Hungarian Lutheran Church (one-fifth of the total number of Protestants in Hungary) have been supplied with a Bible or a New Testament this year.

At the time of the visit of Mr. Béguin, the Old Testament Revision Committee was at work, having started with Isaiah. This was the second session of the committee since the events of 1956. The Revision Committee (66 members) usually meets once a month for about a week.

Professor Dr. L. M. Pakozdy, Secretary of the Revision Committee, has also been appointed General Secretary of the Hungarian Bible Council, Bishop Bereczky remaining Chairman, with Bishop Ordass (Lutheran) and Dr. Szabo (Baptist) as Vice-Chairmen.

India

As already reported, portions of the Scriptures have been published in serial form by the Bible Society of India and Ceylon in various Indian newspapers. One of the B.S.I.C.

secretaries reports on this venture as follows: "The Sermon on the Mount was published in the daily newspaper in a series of 37 issues at the very reduced rate of only Rs. 250. A Christian friend donated Rs. 125 towards this amount in order to share the privilege of enabling the Gospel to go out widely through the newspaper. The publication of the Gospel has created wide interest. Some have written saying they would like to be disciples of the Society and would have a copy of the prospectus sent to them. Others have been ordering Gospels and Bibles. Some of the rural libraries have asked for the "Greatest Book of the World" to be supplied to them. A non-Christian young man has done a bit of colportage work in selling some Gospel portions and has attended special evangelistic meetings as a result of reading the Sermon on the Mount in this way."

Indonesia

The *Indonesian Bible Society* arranged a large display at a conference held in Bandung last summer by the Committee on Evangelism of the National Council of Churches in Indonesia. The conference was attended by about 500 participants. President Sukarno also addressed the conference. The Bible Society display received keen attention. Counter sales amounted to just under Rp. 3,000 and orders were taken for more than Rp. 30,000. In addition, a leaflet containing an adaptation of the A. B. S. pamphlet, "The Pastor and Ways of using the Bible" and others leaflets were distributed to the delegates by the Bible Society.

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The Church of Bali held its official synod meeting last summer in Blimbingsari, a Christian village in the western wilds of the island. The Synod decided to resume the task of translating the Bible into Balinese. A translation programme, begun several years ago, was interrupted when all foreign missionaries were removed from the island in 1951. At that time it was argued that since Indonesian would soon replace Balinese as the language of the area, no such translation was necessary. Events have since shown that this development is unlikely. The Indonesian translation of the Bible is not useable in the village churches; the pastors must translate Scripture passages into Balinese as they preach their sermons. The religion of the people of Bali is so interwoven with and dependent on the local language that Bible scholars have come to the conclusion that a translation into Balinese is an immediate necessity. So the Synod appointed one of its ministers to give full time to the project and made arrangements with the Indonesian Bible Society for periodic consultations with its translation staff in Djakarta.

Italy

The Synod of the Waldensian Church, meeting last September, particularly recommended the development in the churches of group Bible reading and study. A Bible reading plan has been issued with appropriate notes and a Bible dictionary has also been published in order to help group leaders in their work. Several churches, particularly in the neighbourhood of Rome, have given greater emphasis to the circulation of Scriptures in their evangelistic work.

Korea

The Rev. Young Bin Im, General Secretary of the Korean Bible Society, visited Australia and New Zealand during October, at the invitation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in those two countries. During his stay of 54 days he spoke at 110 meetings and in addition gave 16

broadcasts. Writing of Mr. Im's visit to Australia, Mr. S. Russell Baker, General Secretary of the Victoria State Auxiliary, says, "He has warmed our hearts and we are most grateful that this visit to Australia was made possible. His addresses served also to underline the world need for Scriptures and the perplexity of the present production crisis."

In New Zealand Mr. Im was accompanied on his visits by the Rev. R. F. Chisholm, General Secretary of the B.F.B.S. in that country. Mr. R. H. Gardner, a committee member of the Otago and Southland Bible Society, writes of his visit, "In each place (Mr. Im visited) we were able to get together quite a number of Bible Society secretaries and collectors. Altogether his visit was most inspiring and we were able to distribute a quantity of our leaflet 'Crisis Appeal'." The appeal referred to is one which all Bible Societies have been asked to make to their constituency, in light of the serious danger of world Scripture shortage revealed at the meetings of the U.B.S. in Brazil last July.

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The Korean Bible Society has supplied 15,000 New Testaments and 10,000 Portions in Korean for distribution among service men.

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The Christian Literature Crusade is publishing an edition (3,000 copies) of the first Korean Concordance based on the Hankul version of the Bible.

Proper names will not be included in this edition, but will be introduced in a later edition. A total of 140,000 entries have been selected.

Philippines

The American Bible Society is operating a new Bible van in the Philippines, furnished by the special gifts of the Disciples of Christ in the U. S. A. The van contains Scriptures and audio-visual equipment and is handsomely lettered on the outside with the words "Philippine Bible House" and the names of eleven of the languages in which Bibles, Testaments and Portions are being distributed.

Poland

Scripture circulation in Poland in 1957 has again reached over 200,000 copies, which is four times more than the average circulation in the years just preceding the last war.

The B. F. B. S. Agency in Warsaw has recently been visited by Mr. A. L. Haig, B. F. B. S. Secretary for Europe. He reported that almost 1.5 million Scriptures had been circulated in Poland since the end of the war, about one-tenth being whole Bibles.

Portugal

It is reported that a campaign is in progress in Roman Catholic circles in Portugal to circulate one million copies of the Gospels. At the same time a R.C. translation of the New Testament from the Greek is also in progress; all existing R.C. translations are based on the Vulgate.

Scotland

The *National Bible Society of Scotland* reports great rejoicing at the meeting of the Synod of Livingstonia, in the northern province of Nyasaland, at the arrival just before the meeting of the first copies of the Tumbuka translation of the Old Testament (the publication of which was reported in Bulletin 31, p. 137). The Moderator, the Rev. Alfred Mvula, received a presentation copy on behalf of the Church, the book being handed to him by the Rev. Thomas Nhlema, who had had a share in preparing the material for the printer. 10,000 copies of the book have

been printed and the N.B.S.S. reports that already orders for 8,000 have been received.

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The N.B.S.S. has handed over to the binders the first printed sheets of an edition of the Korean Bible in lectern size.

Switzerland

Shortly before Christmas one of the large chocolate manufacturing firms in Switzerland distributed to its employees a copy of the latest illustrated Gospel published by the French Bible Committee. Over 2,000 copies were distributed in this way.

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The following information is taken from the latest report of the Maison de la Bible, Geneva, which has appeared in stencilled form :

The first quarter of a total edition of 100,000 copies of a Soldier's Gospel — a Gospel of John provided with a special cover, with French text — has been printed in Switzerland and is being distributed free of charge among the troops stationed in Algeria and Morocco. These Gospels reach the soldiers by various means: by army chaplains and by believing soldiers, who do not fail to take the opportunity of distributing them in their own units. Members of the staff of important daily papers are also interested and publish advertisements. Many letters could be quoted which (very often) begin by asking for a Gospel, but lead to the purchase of a complete Bible.

The Maison de la Bible has also just completed its second edition of the Italian Bible (20,000 copies). The first consignment arrived just in time for the autumn fair in Bari, where just over 450 copies were sold. Plans are already made for the publication of a third edition. Most of the books distributed in Italy are sold through the Bible Houses in Genoa, Turin and Milan.

Taiwan (Formosa)

There are now five colporteurs at work in Taiwan under the direction of Assistant Secretary Lai Ping. During the first six months of 1957 these colporteurs distributed 1,171 Bibles, 486 New Testaments and 25,466 Portions, representing 30% of the distribution in Taiwan.

Thailand

The American Bible Society has bought a motor launch to be used for colportage work along the rivers and canals of Central Thailand. It will serve a population of approximately 5 millions who live on the canals in this region. It will be manned by a crew of three, two colporteurs and a pilot-mechanic. The launch was built in 1953 and has been fitted with appropriate accommodation for missionary work.

United States of America

For the seventh successive year, the American Bible Society has supplied the Gospel of Luke in a special Christmas cover which is becoming increasingly popular. The Society finds it is an ideal gift for for pastors, Sunday-school groups, business and professional people to send to their friends. On the back cover are the words: "With warm Christmas Greetings", the entire passage of Luke 2: 10,11 and space for the sender's personal greeting.

*

A special selection of daily Scripture readings is printed in the form of a Bible bookmark for those who follow the readings suggested for use in the Worldwide Bible Reading programme from Thanksgiving to Christmas, which is sponsored annually by the A.B.S. This year the Bible Society printed 18,000,000 of these little folders.

*

The American Bible Society has adopted a budget of $4,669,000 for its work during the year 1958. This is the highest budget figure in the history of the Society.

*

One thousand sets of Scripture recordings for the Navaho Indians are now being prepared in Los Angeles to be packaged with the "finger-phono" and furnished at low cost to individual Navahos and missionaries working among the Navahos on the reservation. Each set consists of six 8-inch records with Scripture on both sides of the record. The Scripture selections will be chosen from various passages or combinations of passages, depending on factors of length, cultural relevance and interest of the Navahos.

The records have 55 per cent vinyl content and will be comparable to records which have proved satisfactory in tests through 375 playings with a 3½-ounce head. The records are being produced by Gospel Recordings, Inc. of Los Angeles for the Society, at a cost of approximately 12½ cents each.

*

In ceremonies at the White House, on October 15th, the *American Bible Society* marked the successful distribution of a half-billion volumes of Scriptures since its foundation in 1816. The Rev. Dr. J. Z. Nettinga, the Society's secretary for encouragement of use of the Bible, presented to President Eisenhower the 500,000,001 volume, symbolic of the start of the second half-billion.

*

For a number of years the need for a short Chinese concordance has been recognised. The editing of such a concordance was approved by the A. B. S. Board on August 4, 1955. The manuscript of this concordance has now been completed by two Chinese helpers, Mr. T. J. Ku and Mrs. K. C. Chen, who have done most of the work on this concordance. The manuscript has been prepared along the lines of the English model, with the addition of the biographical summaries and adequate cross-referencing, the total number of context lines being approximately 55,000.

*

The A. B. S. Translation Department has begun working on a book of translators' notes on Mark. For some time it had been felt that it would be useful to provide translators with a series of notes on various books of the New Testament so that they might have called to their attention not only the basic problems in different parts of the biblical text but also ways in which these difficulties have been overcome in various translations.

The plan is for these notes to include data on (1) the Greek text (where this is a problem), (2) exegesis (providing the translator not with a definitive authoritative answer but with an accurate statement of alternatives which might exist and some appraisal of their respective validity, when this can be given with any degree of certainty), and (3) lexicon and syntax (that is, how the biblical text may be translated into other languages).

Because of the volume of work involved and the importance of getting some assistance on the parts dealing with text and exegesis, Dr. Robert Bratcher (who was a member of the Brazilian Portuguese Revision Committee) has been secured to prepare a manuscript of Mark covering these areas of study. Secretary Nida hopes to be able to

complete the translational part (dealing with lexicon and syntax) during the winter.

*

The Translations Department held its first "workshop" in Greenwich, Connecticut, last September. In attendance were all of the overseas personnel of the Department, and various members of the New York staff participated in all or part of the sessions.

The purpose of the workshop was (1)to work out plans for the expanding technical assistance made possible by members of the Department, (2) to co-ordinate the work of the Translations Department more effectively with other phases of the Bible Society programme, and (3) to pool common experience in an effort to develop a creative approach to some strategic aspects of the Society's programme.

United Bible Societies

The Rt. Rev. F. Donald Coggan, Bishop of Bradford, planned to leave London on December 26th for Ghana, to represent the U. B. S. at the conference of the International Missionary Council to be held in Accra from December 28th to January 8th.

*

The U.B.S. Sub-Committee on Translation met at Jordans, England, October 10-12, 1957. One item on the agenda which provoked considerable discussion was that of imprint and its relation to editorial responsibility. In the past it has usually been understood that imprint also implied responsibility but it was clear that in some situations to-day this was no longer the case. As one means of clarifying the situation it was agreed to compile a complete language list, indicating editorial responsibility for each language or version.

Audio-Visual Aid Notes

Bible Society of India and Ceylon

The use of AVA equipment to any large extent is a fairly recent development in the Bible Society of India and Ceylon, and owes its origin to the Third Jubilee meetings in 1954, when the General Secretary made a plea for visual aid equipment which was generously answered by some of the sister Societies. Of set purpose, the equipment chosen has been very simple and in most Auxiliaries the secretaries have only the basic requirements of a camera and a filmstrip projector, while two secretaries have also the use of sound film projectors. We do not wish in India and Ceylon to give the impression that the Society is prepared to spend much money on elaborate equipment, nor is it necessary to have equipment of that kind, as much of our work is in the rural areas, where an announcement of a filmstrip to be shown is sufficient to bring the people together. The use of equipment which is outside the usual experience of villagers can easily hinder rather than help, as its novelty can distract attention from the message, and it is better to use the more simple kind of equipment to which they are accustomed. In the big cities, where they are accustomed to sound films, it is usually possible to borrow a film projector.

More and better filmstrips are our main need at present, as the Auxiliary secretaries and the Women's secretaries are now using these more widely in their touring, and there is also a certain demand from Branch secretaries and pastors of churches to borrow filmstrips that they can show themselves.

Two years ago we made our first filmstrip with the title "The Bible Society at Work", as we felt the need for a filmstrip that would give people general information about different aspects of the work. Although the photographs available were of very uneven quality, this strip has been widely used by our secretaries on tour. We are now in process of making a revised edition, replacing some of the photographs by those of better quality, but keeping the same outline for the script. We are also making a short filmstrip on Women's Work, and hope later to make others dealing with Translation, Distribution etc. At present we are producing black and white filmstrips only, but we hope later to produce some in colour.

In addition to these filmstrips dealing with our own work, we have a few strips showing Bible Society work in other countries, and hope to add to these, as they are always of interest to our audiences.

The scripts of these strips are in English and we come up against the language difficulty when our secretaries are touring in areas where they cannot speak the language. An experiment was recently made in the Bombay Auxiliary, where the script of "The Bible Society at Work" was translated into Marathi and recorded, so that it is now available for the secretary to take with him on his tours.

The strips described above are, of course, mainly used at meetings and services on behalf of the Bible Society.

Another type of filmstrip for which we also find a certain demand is that dealing with biblical subjects, parables, miracles, etc. These are useful for colporteurs and for those working with the Bible vans, where the work is more of an evangelistic character. We do not need to produce these ourselves, as there are plenty available from other organisations, and we have supplied our secretaries with filmstrips of this kind.

It seems that in the future the use of filmstrips will be our main line of development, though we shall need a small supply of sound films for use in the cities.

B. F. B. S.

"For To-morrow's Citizens" is the title of a leaflet, published recently by the B.F.B.S. intended specifically for the use of those who collect funds for the work of the Society. One of the basic methods employed by the B.F.B.S. for the raising of its contributions income is that of the systematic visitation of homes. The whole country is divided into areas known as Auxiliaries, each Auxiliary having a considerable number of collectors. Efforts are being made at the present time to get into touch with homes which have not hitherto been approached and many of which have no living relationship with the Church. For these the traditional "foreign mission" appeal of the B.F.B.S. cannot be employed and has to be substituted by something more closely related to the daily life of the person approached, or to general humanitarian considerations.

For this reason two topics have been selected for emphasis in the new "collectors" leaflet. First, the Jubilee Bible, edited by John Stirling and illustrated by the late

Horace Knowles. The leaflet stresses the extensive call which local education authorities have made — since religious education became obligatory in State schools— for supplies of this Jubilee Bible. Between a half and three-quarters of a million copies have already been published and the education authorities in at least nine counties have purchased large consignments for their schools. The B.F.B.S. has made these available on generous terms, on the understanding that each volume would become the property of the recipient on leaving school.

Secondly, the leaflet refers to other communities being served by the Bible Society in different parts of the world — students, new literates, refugees and the blind. The appeal to the giver is on the grounds of philanthropy and social service rather than of evangelism. It is hoped in this way to enlist the interest and support of those who "don't believe in missions". The use of the leaflet will be restricted to this collecting in new constituencies of potential givers.

Germany

Direktor Diehl, of the Stuttgart Bible Society, writes:

The bookmark which now accompanies all the copies of the Bible published by our Society can also be regarded as a "visual-aid". On the front is a reproduction of a Greek papyrus and a large Bible, above which are the words,"God's Word remains to eternity". On the reverse side of the bookmark is a note to the owner of the Bible to the effect that it is the Society's profound hope that as he gets to know this book he will receive much joy and profit. The note continues: Whoever knows from his own experience what an unfailing source of joy and strength the Bible is, will gladly help to make it possible for others also to possess a copy and to learn how to use it. Ought we not to be more concerned about giving the Bible to people in new nations and to the "younger churches" ?

Contributors to this issue

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Parlamentstrasse 10, Wuppertal-Barmen, Germany.

PRINTED IN ENGLAND BY
W. H. RICKINSON & SON LTD.
PRINTERS & PUBLISHERS
3 & 4 GT. WINCHESTER ST., LONDON, E.C.2